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SOCCER

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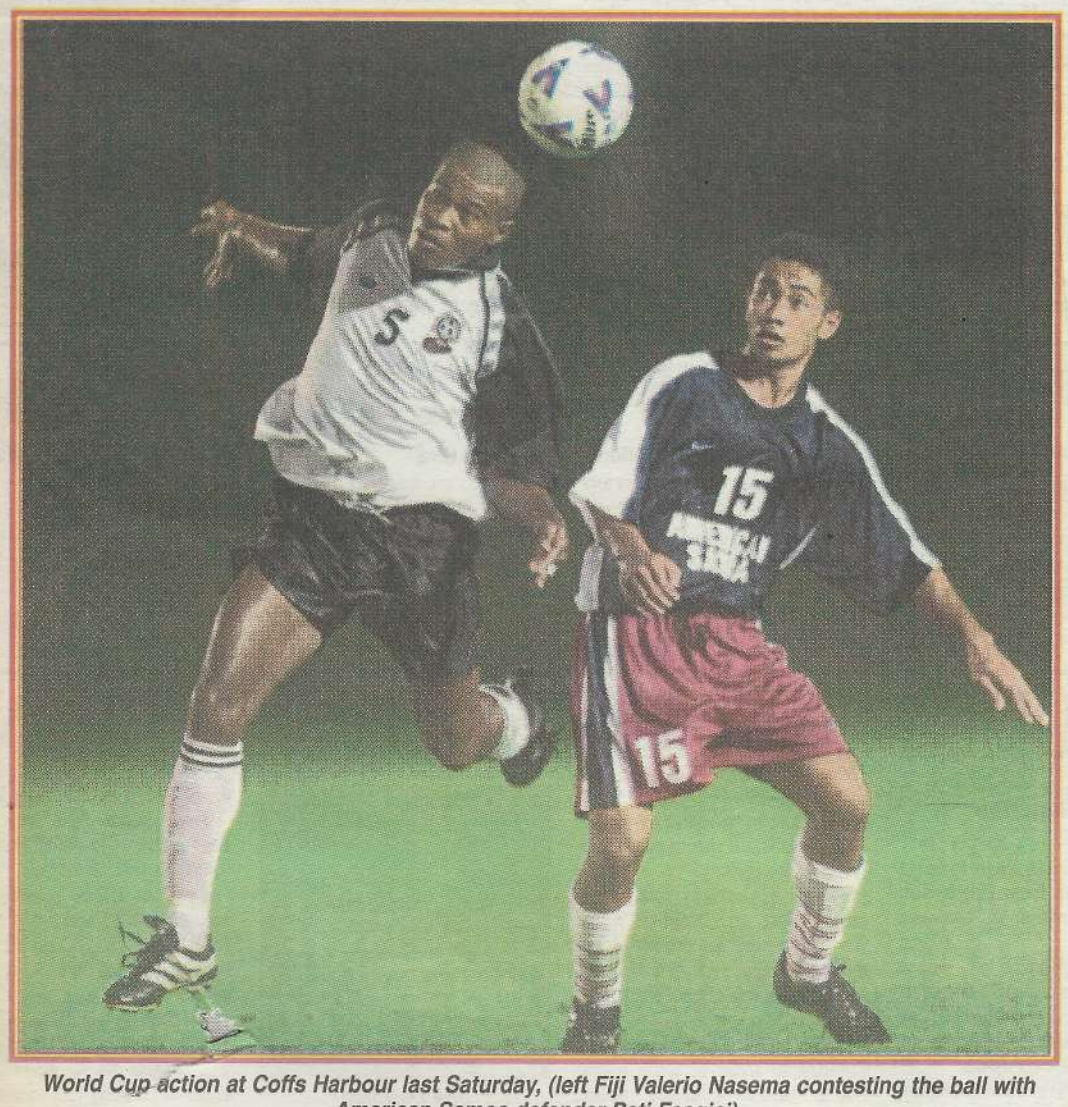
Muscat, Australia's New Skipper

Australia's World Cup Squad seen here last Sunday at a training session in Coffs Harbour: (left to right), Con Boutsianis, Tony Popovic, Steve Corica and captain Kevin Muscat.



World Cup action at Coffs Harbour last Saturday, (left Fiji Valerio Nasema contesting the ball with American Samoa defender Pati Feagiai).

By John Economos

Kevin Muscat, Wolverhampton's, (England Division 1), tenacious defender, is Australia's 'stand-in captain' during the Oceania World Cup qualifiers currently being played in Coffs Harbour.

Muscat vindicated Farina's faith in him, and as a bonus scored five times in the the 18th, 30th, 54th, 56th and 82th minutes against Tonga yesterday at Coffs Harbour.

Australia's regular skipper, Paul Okon, (playing in England with Middlesbrough), was deliberately not drafted into the squad by national coach Frank Farina.

It was understood, (and well prior), that Middlesbrough's coach, and former Australian coach, Terry Venables, would not have released Okon had Farina gone ahead and selected him.

Kevin Muscat: Stand-in captain.

So in his wisdom, Farina endeavoured to avoid a direct, (and for now, a somewhat needless), confrontation with the hierarchy of the troubled, (battling desperately to avoid relegation), Middlesbrough, and deliberately bypassed the highly gifted Okon for these Oceania qualifiers.

Needless to say, the 27 year old Muscat will in no way be daunted by Farina handing him the 'keys' to the Australian captaincy.

Far from it.

Being captain, has become second nature to Muscat, as already he is the hardened skipper at Wolverhampton.

Having been capped 29 times for the national team, Muscat has skippered Australia on many previous occasions, and now as of yesterday, at all national levels.

He first captained Australia in 1993 at the World Youth Championships staged here.

Even more notably, Muscat led Eddie Thomson's 'Green and Gold' Olympic team into battle at the Atlanta '96 Games.

The unyielding Muscat made his senior debut for Australia in 1994 against Kuwait in Malaysia.

After Farina appointed him last Sunday as skipper in Coffs Harbour, Muscat stated: "I'm delighted and very honoured.

"Paul Okon who's captained the squad right through all the preparational games, unfortunately can't be here for this series.

"So I'm more than honoured to do it in this tournament," Muscat ended.

Meanwhile Farina added: "I'm sure he'll, (Muscat), do a good job and it's a most logical choice.

"I'm happy with him. He's got the experience, Club captain at Wolves, which is a big honour in itself, so he's no stranger to the job.

"He's captained Australia at Youth level, and knows all the players and they in turn respect him.

"He's got all the ingredients if you like, for the captaincy," ended Farina.

Lindsay Wilson: who made his debut yesterday against Tonga, seen here in training.

World Cup Qualifier
AUSTRALIA Vs TONGA
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Kiwi Rout Confirms Joeys' W/Cup Ticket

Australia' high-riding U/17 national side, the Joeys thrashed their hosts, New Zealand 6-0 on Sunday afternoon to book their place for the September finals in Trinidad and Tobago. The Australians handed-out a comprehensive defeat to the Kiwis, in Auckland, during the second and decisive leg of their Oceania World Cup qualifying group encounter. Sunday's result ensured an aggregate 9-0 win for the young Aussies, following their 3-0 first leg victory over the Kiwis in Canberra, earlier last week.

With Sunday's emphatic outcome, Australia will now be appearing in her eighth U/17 world cup finals – out of the last nine editions.

Matthew Engele was the hero of Sunday's victory with a thrilling hattrick of goals.Promoted to their starting line-up and he repaid the confidence shown in him by coach Ange Postecoglou by scoring thrice.

Anthony Danze fro Perth Glory youth team, as well as Matthew Hunter and second half substitute Terry Smith completed the rout

"The boys did really well and stepped it up a gear from Wednesday night (first-leg in Canberra) and I couldn't be happier with them," said Postecoglou.

"The kids we have got coming through at the moment and the talent is just unbelievable and it's a credit to all the programs we (Australia) have at the moment and from that point of view it is healthy," added the national youth coach who has now qualified both the U17's and U20's to their respective World Championships, later in the year.

Engele opened the scoring after 13 minutes when he latched onto a Fred Agius cross to head home from the edge of the six-yardbox.

Danze doubled the lead on 38 minutes with Agius again the provider. His low cross was met by a sliding Danze who made no mistake.

After the break the Joeys contiued the onslaught with another four strikes.

Ten minutes into the second-half, captain Carl Valeri, son of the ex-Canberra-born soccer great, Walter, sent Engele away to race towards the box before driving his shot into the back of the net.

It was 4-0 on 70 minutes as Massimo Murdocca's cross fell to Hunter who slammed the ball home from 10 mteres.

Valeri was again on hand to give Smith the chance to sweep home the fifth before the rampant Engele completed his hattrick.

Valeri then topped a dominant performance by gifting Engele another opportunity to score which he duly accepted.

Fred Agius: U/17 Joeys' hardworking playmaker who featured prominently against New Zealand.

JOEYS' LINE-UP:

Nathan Coe (gk); Alex Wilkinson, Matthew Hunter, Predrag Bojic, Carl Valeri (captain), Anthony Danze, Fred Agius (Terry Smith 71 mins), Massimo Murdocca, Spase Dilevski (Steven Baveas 55mins), Brett Holman (Nick Stavroulakis 72 mins), Matthew Engele.

Cosmos fights NSL over expulsion attempt

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos have indicated they will use every weapon in their armory to reverse a decision to have the club thrown out of the National Soccer League at the end of the season.

Within 24 hours of the announcement from Soccer Australia headquarters in Sydney the Cosmos board, in emergency session, decided to lodge an appeal. The directors expressed their "outrage and disbelief" that the club could not be considered a going concern.

And within another day some powerful political allies were throwing their weight behind the club, with ACT Chief Minister Gary Humphries and Sports Minister Bill Stefaniak lobbying SA chairman Tony Labbozzetta and chief executive David Woolley who were in town for the Joeys Word Championship qualifier against New Zealand.

Before that, Soccer Canberra president Steve Doszpot flew to Sydney to add his weight to the argument that to rule the Cosmos out on the grounds of financial inability was fundamentally wrong.

And if informal argument fails Cosmos chairman Danny Moulis, himself a lawyer, was reported to be assembling a team of specialists from the legal profession to handle the appeal process.

Moulis said the team's first task was to examine the reasons for Canberra's exclusion, delivered to him by SA, line by line to test their validity. He declined to publicise the reasons in detail but said it was "amazing" that the club, with a conservative budget and low debt, could be considered less viable than clubs with "spectacular debt positions and accruing liabilities".

"The club continue to pay all of their players and staff, meet their trading liabilities and conduct business as usual," he said.

"Interest in the Cosmos in the Canberra region, and the support for the club, is at an all-time high. The ACT has the highest per capita level of soccer participation in the country.

"We have a competitive team in the best stadium in the country with the most loyal supporters. If both the Brisbane and Canberra regions are excluded from the competition, it won't be a national league at all."

Danny Moulis: Canberra Cosmos chairman.

The Joeys' win over New Zealand provided a clear example of how National League soccer has benefited the ACT area, Canberra's Carl Valeri, the son of former Canberra City star Walter, captaining the side.

A decade ago, at the beginning of the 1990s, junior soccer was on the ropes with boys deserting it in droves for other codes that had a clear pathway to the top.

The advent of the Cosmos provided a boost at grass roots level and junior numbers are now at record highs. That effect is beginning to bear fruit with local youngsters such as David Arranz, Stephen Kemp and Daniel Aliffi coming through the ranks to establish themselves in the first team.

Now, just as in 1986, that process is threatened by a national body persisting in the belief there is some magic formula that will bring instant success to the code.

Over the years there has been restructure after restructure, almost always resulting in the league either slipping back or failing to make real progress. The one thing that has been denied the member clubs is stability. No one at Soccer Australia has had the courage to suggest the competition be left alone for a decade with all clubs guaranteed their places, providing they can fulfill their commitments from season to season.

But given the fascination soccer's administrators have with the 'R' word it is unlikely this will ever be considered.

... PLAYERS, FANS PLAN PROTEST RALLY

Canberra Cosmos will be staging a community rally today (Tuesday) afternoon from 5.00pm in City Walk, Civic at King O'Malley's in protest against the recent announcement by Soccer Australia that threatens the club's position in the National Soccer League. All Canberrans who wish the city to be represented in national sporting competitions are expected to turn out. Cosmos players will be attending ahead of their trip to New Zealand to play the Auckland Kingz.

Cosmos Chairman Danny Moulis, who will address the gathering along with some invited city leaders at about 5.30pm, said "It's quite ironic that our team will be travelling to New Zealand the next day to play a team that has been guaranteed a position in the NSL next season ahead of a club based in the National Capital. Cosmos will strongly state its case for inclusion, and everyone in Canberra can play an important part by showing their support."

DIDULICA QUITS HOLLAND FOR GERMANY

By Roy Hay

Geelong-born keeper Joey Didulica is about to move on loan from Dutch club Ajax Amsterdam to German club Borussia MoenchenGladbach.

The Olyroo keeper has understudied veteran Fred Grim at Ajax this season and is desperate to get some first team experience.

Borussia have been watching him for several weeks and are very keen to sign him outright, but Ajax is unwilling to part with its young star, whom it still sees as part of the future of the club.

A year in Germany could be a huge boost to Didulica with Borussia poised for promotion to the Bundesliga, eight points clear in Liga 2 with only seven games left to play.

Didulica will be in Germany on Tuesday to settle personal terms but is "absolutely thrilled" about the prospect of playing in one of the best leagues in Europe.

Joe Didulica

His coach at Ajax Leo Beenhakker is less than pleased at losing his reserve keeper.

Didulica will be provided with accommodation and a car, and his agent says, "He will be pleasantly surprised by the personal terms on offer."

Meanwhile Didulica has not forgotten where he came from and will sponsor all the junior players at North Geelong this season.

WILSON DEBUTS FOR AUSTRALIA

BY John Economos

LINDSAY WILSON, Sydney Olympic's right wingback, made his debut for Australia yesterday, (Monday), afternoon, in the Oceania World Cup qualifier against Tonga at the International Sports Stadium in Coffs Harbour.

Despite being 21 years of age, (the youngest member in this current Australian squad), national coach Frank Farina unhesitatingly decided to 'baptise' Wilson into the senior ranks of the national team.

The in form Wilson, has previously represented Australia with the Under 20s.

Whilst critics all agree that the first two matches, (Tonga yesterday-Monday, and American Samoa tomorrow-Wednesday), should be a breeze for Australia, there appears to be some slight hesitancy on predictions by the same critics about Australia's clash against Fiji this Saturday.

American Samoa, slaughtered 13-0 by Fiji last Saturday in Coffs Harbour, is the lowest ranked national team in the World, according to FIFA's rankings—203rd.

Worse is to come as now the American Samoans must face Farina's fury tomorrow, (Wednesday), at Coffs Harbour.

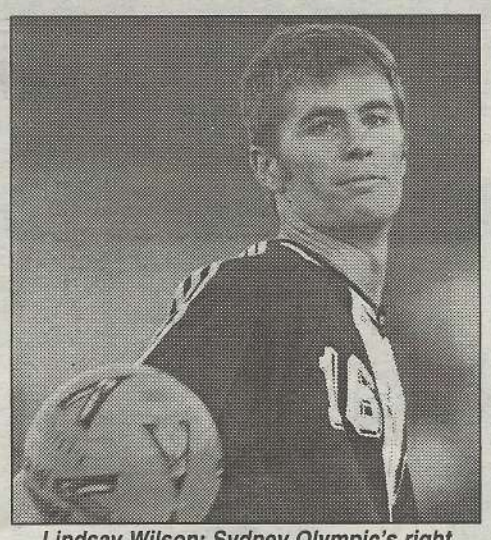
But on Saturday afternoon, (and being Easter Saturday at that), surely no one can honestly expect an Australian crucifixion at the hands of the Fijians?

Or can they?

Without question, Farina will already have worked out some strategy to neutralise, or at least contain, Fiji's athletic captain and dynamic goalscorer, Esala Masi.

The experienced Masi last Saturday rained in no less than four goals that significantly contributed to Fiji's 13-0 pulverisation of American Samoa.

Frank Farina's selection of the two mobile wide men in Wilson, plus Scott Chipperfield on the left, was designed to hopefully yield plenty of quality crosses for twin-marksmen, John Aloisi and Damian Mori.



Lindsay Wilson: Sydney Olympic's right wingback made his debut for Australia last night.

Farina had wisely chosen to select four domestic-based players, (Bolton, Wilson, Chipperfield and Mori), in his First XI which yesterday did battle against Tonga.

Australia's defence of a 'flat-four', precautionally comprised entirely of overseas based players.

Australia's Oceania schedule, is:

April 9th,	**vs**	**Tonga-5.30pm.**
April 11th,	**vs**	**American Samoa-8pm.**
April 14th,	**vs**	**Fiji-5.30pm.**
April 16th	**vs**	**Samoa-5.30pm.**

Australia's team last night was:

Goalkeeper: ..... *C. Bolton.*
Defence: ..... *K. Muscat (c), C. Moore,*
..... *T. Popovic, T. Vidmar:*
Midfield: ..... *L. Wilson, S. Corica, H. Foxe,*
..... *S. Chipperfield:*
Strikers: ..... *J. Aloisi, D. Mori.*

Australia Scores Record 22-0

By Arvind Hickman

Australia opened their World Cup quialifying campaign in historic fashion with a sound 22-0 victory over minnows Tonga at the Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium yesterday.

The scorline is a world record for any World Cup qualifying game.

The home team raced to a 10-0 lead at half time with goals to Scott Chipperfield (3), Damien Mori (13, 23 & 40), John Aloisi (14, 24, 37 & 46), Kevin Muscat (20 & 30).

Australia scored 12 more goals in the second half to demoralise their Pacific neighbours.

Aloisi added another two goals to his tally in the 52nd & 63rd minutes, while other goal scorers included Muscat (54, 56 & 82), David Zdrilic (78 & 91), Tony Popovich(60), Archie Thompson (80), Tony Vidmar (74), Chipperfield (83) and Con Boutsianis (87).

Australia's next game is against American Samoa on April 11th.

Kevin Muscat: Australian captain scored five goals.

AUSTRALIA 22

(Chipperfield 3 & 83, Mori 13, 23, 40, Aloisi 14, 24, 37, 46, 52 & 63, Muscat 20, 30, 54, 56, 82, Zdrilic 78 & 91, Popovich 60, Thompson 80, Vidmar 74, Boutsianis 87)

TONGA 0

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium

AUSTRALIA: Bolton (gk), Muscat (Captain), Moore, Popovic, Vidmar, Wilson, Corica (Boutsianis 71), Foxe, Chipperfield, Aloisi (Thompson 75), Mori (Zdrilic 71).

TONGA: Fincfeuiaki (gk), Uele, Toto, Taufahema, Falepapalangi, Taufahema, Maamaloa, Mafi, Manu, Uhatahi, Fakava.

John Aloisi: Scored six goals.

Pride Runs Out of Time

By Bert van Bedaf

There's little or no Pride left.Senior Eastern Pride players did not turn up for the game against Canberra Cosmos, leaving it to a youth side to lose 7-1 at Bruce stadium last Saturday night.

They simply had had enough, not having been paid for up to six weeks, apart from a small amount, and tired of hearing an asset sale would net the club the necessary funds.

The sale of the social club premises to a Queensland consortium is said to have taken place but the money to clear debts with the local council, other creditors and pay players' wages, is yet to materialise.

"A contract was signed last Thursday, but the funds haven't been transferred yet. I'm just shocked the players have taken this stand," Fred Di Sipio, one of the three Pride owner-directors, said last week.

To rephrase a well-worn former Prime Minister, "God may well save the Queen, because nothing will save Eastern Pride", at least not by the players union.

"It has been getting harder for the players day by day. They feel that enough is enough. It is impossible for them to continue to play and train without an income," Brendan Schwab, chief executive of the Australian Professional Footballers Association, said.

There's still the mistaken belief in Morwell that a club can survice in the national soccer league on the draw of a chook raffle. The fact is this is no longer the case.

Ever since the economic decline of the Morwell area, because of the privatisation of the electricity industry under the former liberal Kennett State government which caused mass unemployment, not even chook raffles are affordable commodities in the ravaged Gippsland region.

Victoria can look back on a decade of failures in the national league with the disappearance of Footscray JUST, Preston, Heidelberg, Melbourne Zebras, Collingwood and Carlton - and now Pride on the chopping block as well.

Soccer Australia did not even bother to rate Pride, nor Cosmos for that matter. Both clubs were deemed not going concerns and will most certainly be eliminated from the NSL next season.

When the vital list was released last week, Canberra and Pride failed to score a ranking, surely the kiss of death if ever there was one.

Notwithstanding the capital blow, Pride director Peter Quirk came out fighting. "There's still a long way to go yet," he said.

But the road to oblivion may not be so long or far off after all. Pride and Cosmos have pledged to appeal the Soccer Australia rankings. Appeals are being heard between April 12 and 23. SA will decide of on the composition of the NSL for next season on June 4.

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The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

The Super Soccer Channel, SBS, who have once again obtained the exclusive, free-to-air rights, for the F.A. Cup Final, will cover this historically mega-event, Live, on Saturday May 12th, direct from the Millennium Stadium, Cardiff, Wales.

This year's F.A. Cup Final promises to be a classic when the giants of Liverpool collide head on with London favourites, Arsenal.

The telecast will commence from 10.30pm a.e.s.t.

Liverpool yesterday, (Monday), morning, scraped home 2-1 against Division 2 giant killers, Wycombe Wanderers.

Arsenal also qualified for the Cup Final by downing fellow-London side, Tottenham Hotspurs with an identical scoreline.

Liverpool's second and last goal was nailed in by captain and striker, Robbie Fowler.

Jean Paul de Marigny: Gone from Marconi.

❑❑❑❑

SOCCER AUSTRALIA is about to strike turbulent and hostile legal waters from this week as two NSL clubs have set themselves up to launch separate legal attacks on the nation's governing body.

Last week, having been told that they failed in the NSL's assessment-ranking for inclusion in the National League next season, the Canberra Cosmos made it clear that it will be coming out fighting for its survival with all guns at their disposal, blazing.

Soccer Australia ruled that in reference to the set criteria, the Cosmos could not be classified as a 'going concern', and thus failed the assessment.

Canberra's emotionless chairman, Danny Moulis, (himself a lawyer with a large legal firm), coldly threatened:

"It's half-time and we, (the Cosmos), are a goal down.

"But we will be coming out of the tunnel for a second half, (i.e. against Soccer Australia).

Danny Moulis: Canberra Cosmos' lawyer/Chairman.

Robbie Fowler (r): Liverpool's captain/striker, glides past Wycombe Wanderers' Michael Simpson at Villa Park, early yesterday morning in Birmingham.

❑❑❑❑

JEAN PAUL de MARIGNY, Marconi's Youth team coach, suddenly parted company with his Club after last Saturday night.

The former international attacking defender was thought to have been considering taking up an assistant coaching position with the Northern Spirit next season.

But the hierarchy at the 'Palace' was less than impressed when it heard of de Marigny's intentions.

Then out of the blue, late last week, De Marigny himself asked to be released from Marconi, effective immediately.

❑❑❑❑

Soccer Australia will not have Canberra as its only legal opponent.

Even before Canberra, Sydney Olympic has now thrown down it's legal-gauntlet on a completely different issue.

Now, right out of the blue, (because everyone had forgotten about it), Sydney Olympic, as from tomorrow, (Wednesday), commences its legal proceedings against Soccer Australia.

Olympic's beef, has absolutely nothing to do with their own assessment for inclusion in next season's reduced formatted League.

Its over Olympic having their three League points wiped from their team after having been the only side to have defeated the now defunct, Carlton, in Round 1.

Olympic had previously threatened that it would launch a legal attack against Soccer Australia if all three points were not re-instated months ago.

The threat was made by Olympic's chief, part-owner and car magnate, the no-nonsense Nick Politis.

The high-profiled Politis in the Australian sporting world, engaged his barristers to scan the situation.

Now his barristers have strongly advised that the Club has a very good case to have all three League points re-instated.

What a mess that is going to create.

With Carlton's demise after seven rounds in the League, Soccer Australia ordained that all previous results in games played against Carlton, would be nullified.

With a bye then being brought in to account for the odd numbered (15) League, Soccer Australia also ruled that every team having a 'bye' would also automatically be awarded three League points.

One problem arose from all this.

In the seven matches that Carlton did play, Sydney Olympic was the only team to inflict a defeat on Carlton and thus now still feel victimised that they have had those three League points taken away from them 'off the pitch' and illegally.

What should in reality have happened, was for Soccer Australia to have cancelled out all seven results, irrespective whether teams won, lost or had drawn in those matches against Carlton.

In other words to rate that those 'seven games' were not played at all, Cancel the lot.

Olympic's included.

It's believed that Soccer Australia erroneously granted three League points to ALL the teams when it was their turn to have a 'bye', just to appease everyone.

Everyone that is, except Olympic.

Olympic's General manager, Peter Raskopoulos, contacted Soccer Australia last Monday week, (April 2nd).

He was duly informed by Soccer Australia, that a decision on Olympic's complaint to have all three League points re-instated would be made by Saturday, March 30th.

But a decision was not made by then.

Raskopoulos was then informed, 'no decision had been made yet by Soccer Australia because of the surrounding 12 team League issue'.

Peter Raskopoulos: Olympic's General Manager.

Olympic was then notified that a final decision would be made at a later date.

That was not good enough for the high-powered businessman, Politis.

Following extensive discussions with Olympic's barristers, they advised the Olympic Club to take the matter to court.

The first hearing has now been set down for tomorrow morning, (Wednesday), at 10 am in the Supreme Court of NSW-Equity Division.

❑❑❑❑

Australia's World Cup qualifiers have now kicked off in earnest up at Coffs Harbour, and we most certainly hope that Frank Farina's lads will do the 'Green and Gold' most proud.

Almost certainly assured, various colourful stories will stream out of Coffs Harbour almost daily till the Tournament is completed.

But here's a story, (not one from cricket either), that recently emanated out from the West Indies.

It's a Soccer story, but one with a strange twist.

Hope you like it.

Forget for a moment France, Argentina, Brazil, England, Germany, Holland, or even Portugal.

This story concerns a match played between Barbados and Grenada in a Cup, (not World), competition.

Dunga: Would the legendary captain of Brazil stand for this nonsense?

Barbados desperately needed to win this game by Two Clear Goals in order to progress to the very next round. Now the pending problem was initially caused by a daft ruling in the competition.

The ruling stated that in the event of a game being forced to go into the dreaded phase of a penalty-shoot-out, the winner on penalties would be awarded a 2-0 victory scoreline.

With five minutes to go, Barbados hit the front, leading 2-1, and dropping out of the tournament, (because they needed to win by "Two Clear Goals").

Then, when they realised they were probably not going to score against Grenada's by-now heavily stacked defence, Barbados turned round, and deliberately scored an "own goal" to level the scores, and take the game straight into a penalty-shoot-out phase.

Grenada, themselves, (not being stupid), realised what was going on and then attempted to score an "own goal" themselves to lose by only one goal.

However, the Barbados players started defending their opponents' goals to try to prevent this.

In the last five minutes, spectators were treated to an absolutely incredible sight.

Both teams were defending their opponents' goal, against attackers desperately trying to score an "own goal".

As well, both goalkeepers tried to throw the ball into their OWN net.

Startling stuff, really.

The game ultimately went to penalties, which Barbados won and thus were awarded a 2-0 victory scoreline and progressed to the next round.

Can you believe this??

❑❑❑❑

Now for a story on a much sadder, (maybe even humorous), note, but a true story nevertheless.

A former Australian international midfielder, loaned $7,500 to an old friend who desperately wanted to have urgent plastic surgery done to his FACE.

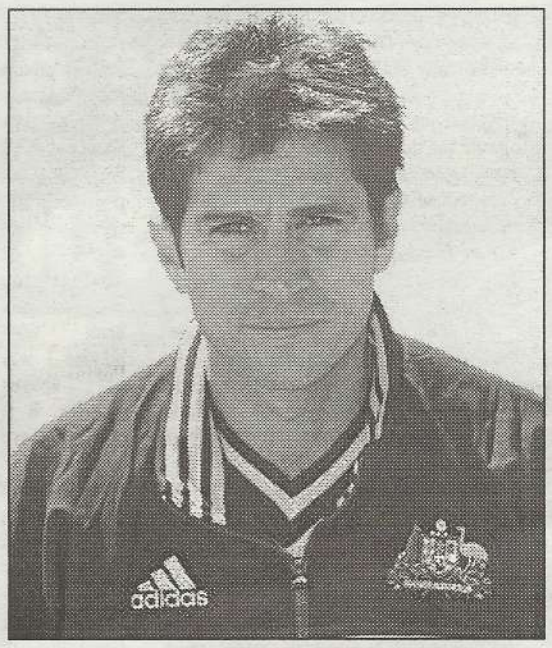
That was 18 months ago.

Now the horrified former international player, no longer can recognise, or find, his old friend, as he's unable to identify him to chase him for the money he loaned him 18 months ago.

Sad?

A really two-faced friend.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil



By John Economos

THE MARCONI STALLIONS tomorrow, (Wednesday), will hold its annual Easter Sponsors' Luncheon in the picturesque 'Elettra Restaurant'.

All Marconi official Sponsors and members of the Sydney Soccer media, will be wined and dined with some very special entertainment following the conclusion of the luncheon.

The special guest entertainer will be non other than Australia's most popular comedian, former Irishman, Brian ('Ripper') Doyle.

Marconi's Public Relations, for years, has unquestionably been impeccable.

Frank Farina: Australia's coach happy with the draw.

□□□□

Australia has been drawn against France, Korea and Mexico for the Group A games of the 2001 Confederation of Nations Cup to be held from May 30th to June 10 in Japan and Korea.

The draw is:

Group A:

May 30th.

France vs Korea Republic-5pm-Daegu, Korea.

Australia vs Mexico-7.30pm-Suwan, Korea.

June 1st.

Australia vs France-5pm-Daegu, Korea.

Korea Republic vs Mexico-7.30pm-Ulsan, Korea.

June 3rd.

France vs Mexico-7.30pm-Ulsan, Korea.

Australia vs Korea Republic-7.30pm-Suwan, Korea.

Kick off times are all in local time.

Australia's coach Frank Farina who last week flew to Seogwipo, Korea, for the draw, stated: "I'm happy with the draw and looking forward to playing some good, quality teams.

"I'm also happy with the order of the matches, playing the Mexicans first, followed by France and then the home side.

"All seven teams in the tournament are ranked above us and they are all quality teams. So in the end it didn't matter which Group we were drawn in. It's going to be tough, but we're not worried about that. Right now I'm looking forward to our World Cup qualifiers in Coffs Harbour.

By the way, the Group B matches which will all be played in Japan, are follows:

May 31st.

Brazil vs Cameroon-5pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Japan vs Canada-7.30pm-Niigata, Japan.

June 2nd.

Canada vs Brazil-5pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Cameroon vs Japan-7.30pm-Niigata, Japan.

June 4th.

Brazil vs Japan-7.30pm-Ibaraki, Japan.

Cameroon vs Canada-7.30pm-Niigata, Japan.

□□□□

EIGHTEEN years ago a bright and energetic little kid was playing with the Bellambi Juniors in the Illawarra League.

Yesterday afternoon, (Monday), Scotty ('Chippers') Chipperfield, the Wollongong Wolves' deadly goalscorer with a lethal left foot, made his debut-start for Australia against Tonga in the Oceania World Cup qualifiers currently being staged in Coffs Harbour, NSW.

Back in 1983, whilst playing for Bellambi Juniors Under 7s, (his first year in Soccer), 'Chippers' had already signalled that he was destined to one day play for his country.

That same year, as a talented Junior possessing blistering pace, Chipperfield scored no less than 13 goals.

Now with the national team, 'Chippers' has already scored a goal for Australia, when earlier this year our national team was downed 3-2 in a friendly by Colombia.

In that game 'Chippers' came on in the second half and scored a very late goal when he stole the ball from the Colombian goalkeeper.

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CON MAKRIS, the head of the consortium that has already lodged his application to enter a new team from South Australia into next season's compact NSL, and if accepted by Soccer Australia, is expected to announce a new name for the fledgling Club.

"The team will not be playing under the name 'South Coast Eagles', but under a tag more suitable, and more appropriate to the South Australian Soccer public," stated Makris late last week.

Four names have already been pencilled in and are on a short-list.

The design of the logo and Club strip will feature South Australia's traditional colours, (red, blue and gold).

Members closed to the Makris group have already made strong assurances of the new Club's strong financial resources backing the entry into the League.

'Good Oil' has also been inform that officials of the above club have already on standby no less than eight Socceroos ready to be signed up.

□□□□

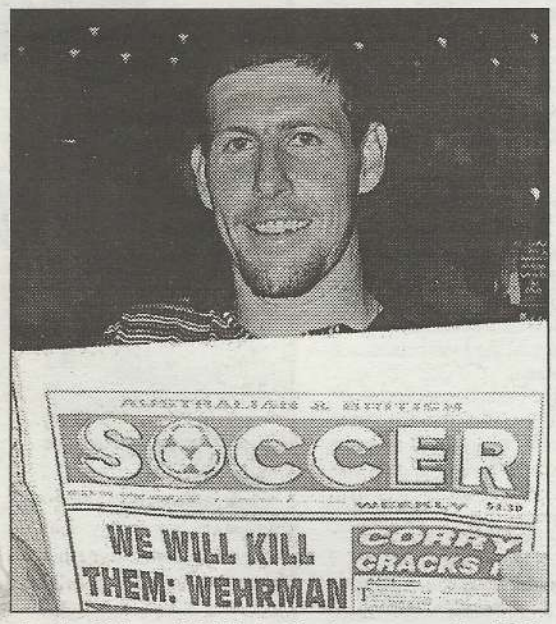
EDDIE KRNCEVIC, Marconi's coach, after last Saturday night's 0-2 loss to the Perth Glory, reflected: "We started off well in the first 15 minutes but the Glory caught us out on the break, twice.

"There were positives and in the second half we did try to make a game of it by creating chances. But it's hard to break the Glory down as they play on the counter.

"The pressure is now back on us once more to get a result in our last three games.

"We now have three 'Cup Final' matches coming up for us," lamented Krncevic.

Eddie Krncevic: Marconi's coach facing the music.



Scotty Chipperfield: Voted last season as the NSL's 'Player Of The Year'.

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DARREN STEWART, is still highly active in Asian Soccer.

The dynamic former goalscoring Newcastle Breakers' centre-back who went to Malaysia some years back seeking fame and fortune, is still currently playing.

However the now 34 year old Stewart is no longer in Malaysia, but has been for the past three years in Singapore playing in the S-League with Balestier Central.

When the Asian financial melt-down swept across Malaysia, all foreign players, (coaches as well), were forced by Government policy to leave the country almost immediately.

This was seen as part of the Malaysian Government's draconian measures adapted, to abruptly curb a vast outflow of its currency offshore.

Stewart who at that time had tasted great success in Malaysia with Johore, having won promotion into the First division then the same season winning the Cup Final, moved out to neighbouring nation, Singapore.

Since arriving in Singapore, Darren's outstanding form plus charisma, have earned the strong Australian a somewhat cult following at the Toa Payoh Stadium.

The 32 year old strapping, strong stopper, is Balastier's sweeper and part-time coach whilst the Club's official coach is absent studying for his FIFA coaching badge.

Now that things have cooled down in Malaysia, it's believed that Darren has a strong desire to return to his old Club, Johore.

Darren Stewart: In Singapore, and still playing.

□□□□

BERND STANGE, the Perth Glory's German coach, was relaxed after having just witnessed his side last Saturday night defeat Marconi 0-2 in Sydney.

"I believe that we deserved this comfortable win, even though we had problems with some five players, (Mori, Harnwell, Miller, Pryce and Traykovski), missing through injury or on national duties.

"However others were able to step up and do a very good job in their absence."

The strict but pleasant Stange, soon switched to a Germanic tone, when questioned if this team was doing better than last season's side.

Stange flatly refused to accept this suggestion.

He quipped back with: "Last year we had a better year and were more consistent.

"The better job we do at Club level, the more of our players are being called into the national team," ended Stange.

Bernd Stange: The Glory's proud coach.

□□□□

OF THE NSL's top four goalscorers, (Bobby Despotovski, Damian Mori, Ben Burgess and Saso Petrovski), only Wollongong Wolves' marksman, Petrovski was able to add to his tally, (now 15 goals), last weekend.

Petrovski scored Wollongong's first goal last Saturday night as Ron Corry's lads turned up the heat to defeat Sydney Olympic 3-1 at the WIN Stadium.

With Damian Mori absent on national duty and his Club team-mate Despotovski failing to score against Marconi last Saturday night, Petrovski's latest goal has enabled him to edge right up behind the Glory's dynamic duo who have 16 goals a-piece.

Saso Petrovski: Wollongong's ace striker.

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ALISTAIR EDWARDS, the Perth Glory's former international and left mid-field-striker, has been a busy lad of late.

Alistair Edwards: The Perth Glory's ever-green marksman.

Next September, (according to Ali's lovely wife, Gracie), he should expect to become a father for the fourth time.

Already Edwards' nine year old son Ryan, is a bit of a goalscorer himself in Junior Soccer over in Perth.

Edwards who again scored for the Glory last Saturday night against Marconi, earlier this year was elected as an Alderman on a local Council.

And on top of all this, Edwards who is a graduate in Sports Management, has been offered a position with a Governmental department.

Carl Valeri: The 'Italian' Joey Stallion

By Mark Stavroulakis

Carl Valeri, a name certainly on everyone's lips at the moment, as the current LG Joeys captain is one hot prospect.

Young Valeri's game has already been compared to the likes of Paul Okon and Ned Zelic, and the scary thing is, he's only a sixteen year-old.

Canberra-born and bred, Carl started off his career at the local Canberra premier league as a raw 13-year-old. "The competition in Canberra isn't too strong, this enabled me to leap over a couple of age groups. As a 13-year-old I played in the U15's for Canberra Deakin and as a 15-year-old I played for Canberra Juventus. I really enjoyed playing for both clubs, especially being the youngest in both squads, it really brought out the best in me," said Valeri.

ACT Academy of Sport were also keen on young Carl and managed to sign the youngster on a year's scholarship, which proved really beneficial for the young lad's future. "I was 14 years-old and I had signed a year's deal with the ACT Academy. It was a terrific period for me as I really enjoyed the training and coaching down there. Head coach at the time and currently assistant coach at the AIS,

Carl Valeri: Joeys stalwart

Ray Junna was inspirational in making me into a better player. I was given my first chance to play for the ACT at the age of14 where I debuted against the AIS. Overall, this academy was definitely one of the stepping stones towards my future", said the ACT Academy graduate.

During his successes at the ACT Academy, young Valeri was also chosen to represent and captain ACT in the National Identification Tournaments held once every year. "I captained the U14, U15 and U16 side which was a huge honor for myself. It was a good chance to see what I was up against as we were playing against the best players from around Australia. The best tournament ACT did well in was last year in the U16's where we traveled to Sydney and got through to the semi-finals against QLD, where we unfortunately lost on the golden-goal rule. Representing ACT was however a huge achievement for myself," said the ACT Captain.

Youth Profile

Currently sitting in top spot of the National Youth League, the AIS are again proving to be too strong for the rest of the competition and a finals spot beckons for O'Connor's young guns.

The biggest honor a soccer player could ever have is being able to represent your country and young Carl did just that and went that one step further than everyone else. "Getting selected for the current Joeys team was the best feeling one could ever have. I was over the moon when I found out I made the team and knew that from then on it was down to me in proving myself as an international player. I've had the help of 'Rocks' who's kept me level-headed and now it's all about working hard in getting to the top, especially at international level," said the Joeys number seven.

Young Carl achieved a dream so many youngsters wished they had and that was captaining an Australian side. "It's the best feeling ever, I can't describe it, being captain of your country would have to be the best honor you could ever receive.

Qualifying was the next step in the Joeys agenda and they did just that after surpassing many hapless teams from Oceania.

New Zealand was the to be the final team in Australia's quest for World Cup qualification in Trinidad and Tobago, and the young Joeys, led by Carl Valeri did achieve that elusive dream.

"Trinidad and Tobago here we come", those were the joyous words LG Joeys' captain Carl Valeri responded to after the young guns impressive 6-0 and overall 9-0 victory over New Zealand in the Oceania Qualifiers last Sunday afternoon.

"Everything went to plan in both matches, in Canberra we started off a bit shaky but ended off in a high, scoring three goals and conceding none. The second match in New Zealand was huge as a little slip up could have cost us, but we had our minds on the job and did ever so well in achieving a terrific result. As soon as the match ended in Wellington, the boys knew that it was time to focus on the World Cup," said Valeri.

The Lake Ginnendera student's ambitions this year is to try and win the World Cup with Australia and to hopefully capture the title with the AIS in the National Youth League. Playing abroad is also another big ambition for this promising youngsters quest for the rest of this season.

Having already trailed for English Premier League side Southampton last year, Carl's dream is to one-day play for a Serie A club, preferably his favorite side, AC Milan. "I spent two weeks at Southampton and saw first hand what players I was up against overseas. It is vital that I have someone to look after me in securing a safe deal overseas and I'm very close in signing with the SFX Group who will help me out once my scholarship runs out at the AIS" said the European bound Aussie.

APOLOGY

Due to production difficulties, there was a mix-up last week over the picture of Joeys' goalie, Nathan Coe. Below is the correct picture of Coe. Thanks

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

NORTHERN DIVISION - RD 26

LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.I.S.	25	20	3	2	73	28	63
Marconi Colts	23	17	2	4	65	17	53
Parramatta	24	16	3	5	70	31	51
Northern Spirit	24	14	3	7	58	33	45
Wollongong	25	13	6	6	53	28	45
Newcastle Utd	23	13	4	6	55	28	43
Marconi	22	11	2	9	50	38	35
Sydney Olympic	23	10	4	9	52	44	34
Q.A.S.	25	11	1	13	38	57	34

ROUND 26 RESULTS

Deferred Match from Round 18 — Played on Wednesday 4 April 2001
Marconi Stallions Youth 1 (Guleserian 37)
Wollongong Wolves 0

Deferred Match from Round 1 — Played on Friday 6 April 2001
Newcastle United Colts 0
Newcastle United Youth 6
(own goal 4, Mansley 30, 32, K. O'Brien 36, A. Hughes 83, Provost 91)

FRIDAY 6 APRIL 2001
Parramatta Power 4 NSWIS 0
(Down 12, Thorp 16, Santalab 17, 76)

SATURDAY 7 APRIL 2001
Wollongong Wolves 3 (Nohra 55, Dimitrievski 70, Austin 86) Sydney Olympic Youth 1 (Amegashie 80)
Canberra Cosmos 4 (Scott 24, Aleksic 87, 91, Chartres 90)
Newcastle United Colts 0

Marconi Stallions Youth 9 ACT Academy 0
(Karl 4, 43, 48, Guleserian 11, 78, 87, 89, Lo Proto 52, Mondello 54)

SUNDAY 8 APRIL 2001
Sydney Olympic Academy 0 AIS 6
(Wells 2, Sekulovski 6, Tarka 18, Martin 72, 89, Brosque 83)

SOUTHERN DIVISION - RD 24

LEADING GOALSCORERS

Name	Club	Goals
Steve Manceski	South Melbourne	26
Nick Waite	Carlton Peninsula Blues	14
Denis Mustac	Eastern Pride	13
Dimitri Tsiaras	South Melbourne	12
Veton Korcarevski	South Dandenong	11
Brett Cunningham	Fawkner Blues	10
Robert Dolevski	Preston Lions	10
Aref El Dib	South Melbourne Eagles Ac	10
Carlo Melina	Carlton Peninsula Blues	9
Ben Cogger	Melbourne Knights	9
Viktor Memeti	South Dandenong	9

ROUND 25 RESULTS

Saturday 14 April 2001

South Melbourne Eagles Academy v Melbourne Knights,
(Keilor Park Reserve, 5 pm)
Green Gully v Bulleen Zebras,
(Green Gully Reserve, 5 pm)

Sunday 15 April 2001

Albury-Wodonga v Preston Lions, (Greenfield Park, 4 pm)
Melbourne Knights Academy v South Melbourne,
(Knights Stadium, 1 pm)

Monday 16 April 2001

VIS v Peninsula Blues,
(The Grange Reserve, 4 pm)
Bye v Fawkner Blues
Bye v South Dandenong
Bye v Eastern Pride

South Melbourne 11 South Dandenong 1

South Melbourne hammered South Dandenong by eleven goals to one at Bob Jane Stadium last Monday night in the final game in Round 23.

South Dandenong had a players sent off and a couple of injuries reduced it to seven fit men at one stage, but the match was played to a finish. Dimitri Tsiaras was the top scorer with five goals. Vince Kalageracos scored twice and the other South Melbourne goals were singles to Theo Petidis, Sahim Rahim, Okan Simsek and Nick Tolios.

South Dandenong's goal from the penalty spot was by Mentor Memeti.

Fawkner Blues 3 South Melbourne Eagles Academy 4

South Melbourne Eagles Academy won a seven goal thriller against Fawkner Blues coming back from two-one and three-two down to snatch victory with 12 minutes left to play.

Sam Arico scored the first of his two goals to put the Academy in front in 18 minutes, but within two minutes Ross Lagana had equalized and six minutes later the Blues were ahead through Michael Cimino.

Gianni De Nittis equalized for the Academy, then Michael Amadei restored the Blues narrow lead. Vito Falcone scored for the Academy in 54 minutes to level things again.

The match surged from end to end and it took a penalty kick by Arico in 78 minutes to give the Academy the advantage it held until the end.

Melbourne Knights 4 Albury Wodonga 1

Melbourne Knights had no trouble in beating its bogy side this time, accounting for Albury Wodonga by four goals to one at Knights Stadium.

Ben Cogger opened for the Knights in 24 minutes and ten minutes later Zoltan Zold made it two. Daniel Vasilevski scored on the hour and Xhezair Sulemani scored the fourth in 67 minutes. Ryan Giles got a consolation goal for the Warriors in the 89th minute.

The boys from the border fought hard as always but this was not their day.

Preston Lions 2 Green Gully 0

Preston Lions had an excellent two-nil win over Green Gully. Robert Mitrevski opened for the Lions and Robert Dolevski's eleventh goal of the season secured the Lions' fourth win of the season.

It was an excellent all round performance by the Lions and Green Gully contributed fully to the game but had no luck in front of goal. This result leaves four teams on thirteen points fighting to avoid the wooden spoon for 2000-2001.

Peninsula Blues v Eastern Pride
(Match postponed)

ROUND 23 & 24 RESULTS

Monday 2 April 2001
South Melbourne 11 South Dandenong 1

Saturday 7 April 2001
Fawkner Blues 3 South Melbourne Eagles Acad 4

Preston Lions 2 Green Gully 0

Sunday 8 April 2001
Peninsula Blues v Eastern Pride
(Match postponed)
Melbourne Knights 4 Albury-Wodonga 1
Bulleen Zebras 1 VIS 3
(Already played Wednesday 13 December 2000)

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
A.I.S.	23	19	3	1	66	24	60
South Melbourne In.	20	18	0	2	114	23	54
Eastern Pride	21	17	2	2	67	12	53
Melbourne Knights	21	14	1	6	60	23	43
VIS	22	12	4	6	54	35	40
Peninsula Blues	19	11	1	7	47	30	34
Melbourne Knights Ac	19	10	1	-8	25	27	31
South Dandenong	19	8	3	8	36	45	27
South Melbourne E	20	8	2	10	33	44	26
Green Gully Cavaliers	21	6	4	11	27	41	22
Albury Wodonga	21	3	4	14	21	58	13
Bulleen Zebras	20	3	4	13	25	61	13
Fawkner Blues	21	4	1	16	31	72	13
Preston Lions	20	4	1	15	23	92	13

Oceania's World Cup Qualifiers ... Oceania World Cup Qualifiers

Tonga have defeated Samoa 1-0 in the opening match in Group One of the Oceania World Cup Qualifiers at Coffs Harbour last Week.

The last encounter between these two teams resulted in a 4-0 drubbing by Samoa, making the form reversal all the more remarkable.

Tongan striker Lokoua Taufahema scored the solitary goal in the 87th minute after the Samoan keeper flapped at a cross from the right.

Tongan coach Gary Phillips, a veteran of 379 games and two premierships in the Australian National Soccer League, said Tonga had their chances in the first half, missing twice in the first minute including one shot that hit the woodwork.

"We dominated and failed to score in the first half. It was end-to-end stuff," he said.

The ex-Brisbane Strikers

custodian had only been in Tonga for four weeks prior to the game, but was already keen on fostering young talent.

"We have five under-20 players in our squad. This is a great start for us," he said. "To win over Samoa or American Samoa is a big thing for Tonga."

"I've only just learnt the players' first names, to be honest, and some of the players had not worn boots before."

MATCH 1

TONGA 1

(L. Taufahema 86)

SAMOA 0

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium. Referee: R. Leaustic (Tahiti)

Cautions: Manu (TNG) 22, Michael (SAM) 27, Falepapalangi (TNG) 42.

Teams: TONGA: Fincfeuiaki, Uele, Taufahema, Falepapalangi, Taufahema, Maamaloa, Fonua (Fakava 72), Fuimaono (Fe'ao 47), Moleni (S. Moa 58), Manu, P. Moa.

SAMOA: M. Tokuma, Falilu, Lemana, Bureta, Victor, Asafo (Sua-mili 71), Lilomaiava (Gabriel 67), E. Tokuma, Faaisuaso, Michael, Lemana (M. Michael 71).

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP KOREA JAPAN

MATCH 2

FIJI 13

(E. Masi 3, 12, 53 & 54, S. Lal 23, 24, 28, 39 & 45, U. Mateiwai 31, V. Nasema 56, A. Samy 70 & 75)

Venue: Coffs Harbour International Sports Stadium. Referee: D. Rugg.

Cautions: none

Teams: FIJI: Kumar, Nasema, M. Masi, Baleinuku, Namaqa (Lal 16), E. Masi, Leka, Mateiwa (Samy 64), Roluvenisoba, Toma, Sauturaga (Vurukania 80).

AMERICAN SAMOA: Salapu, Leututu, Falimaua (Savea 89), Fatu, Faaloua, Sinapati, Savea, Mulipola, Feagiai (Silao 72), Falaniko (Maina 53), Min.

NEXT MATCHES:

APRIL 9

4.30 pm - Tonga vs Australia

7.00pm - American Samoa vs Samoa

Bye - Fiji

Clint Bolton: Australia's World Cup goalkeeper plays with the ball at training last Sunday afternoon at Coffs Harbour.

Damian Mori and Lindsay Wilson, members of the Australian team tango in training before yesterdays game against Tonga.

Goalkeepers

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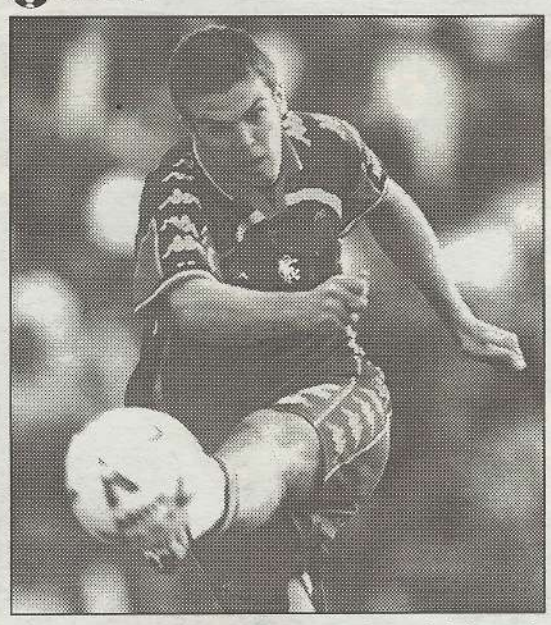


Ben Burgess: His performances have brightened Spirit's dull season.

Letters to the Editor

Thumbs up for Farina

Dear Editor,

I would like to applaud National Coach Frank Farina for having the guts to pick European based players, as well as out-of-favour players for the ongoing World Cup Qualifiers in Coffs Harbour.

Farina has displayed the necessary courage and leadership that is pertinent in steering our team to World Cup success.

By picking Con Boutsianis, and Damian Mori, Farina has set a very clear precedent; that players shall be picked on their ability only.

It is well-documented that Boutsianis had a run in with the Law and Mori had slagged the National Coach recently, so Farina has shown maturity well beyond his years to consider these two tremendously talented players.

Farina also had the guts to stand up to FIFA threats and pick a handful of European players including the highly rated John Aloisi. By doing this he has shown his strength as the General and made it very clear that nothing will get in the way for qualification as has been the case in the past.

I just hope, now that Farina has given these players the opportunity, he ensures that they have every chance of making the final cut if they show the qualities desired.

Here, here, Farina, I salute you!

J. Wallace
Fremantle, WA.

Frank Farina: Australia's courageous general.

Con Boutsianis

Damian Mori

SPIRIT'S SINKING SHIP

Dear Editor,

What on earth has gone wrong with the Northern Spirit? Are they not the most-disgraceful team in the National Soccer League at the moment??

I used to support Northern Spirit during their first two seasons when they were the next best thing to sliced bread, and were pulling bumper crowds of over 10,000.

I went to their last home game against the Melbourne Knights and was disgusted with what I saw. A team of 'richly' talented players being made to look like a bunch of amateurs.

I saw them loose to Eastern Pride at North Sydney Oval this year and they weren't much better.

They had no commitment, desire or cohesion. Admittedly they played against a strong Melbourne Knights outfit, but they never once looked like they wanted to score.

Are they being grossly overpaid and pampered?? I don't know, but I wouldn't waste a dollar to see these perennial under achievers again.

The only player of their's worth rating, is the import Ben Burgess, who is a class above his team mates.

Why should teams which perform well like the (13) Kingz and (10) Marconi be considered for the chop (according to rankings list), when they are performing well on the field and show the desire to play at this level.

Shouldn't a Soccer competition be graded on a team's Soccer ability and not by how much money that pathetic excuse of a governing body, Soccer Australia, can bleed from the clubs??

Even Canberra at times has shown more ability than the hapless Spirit by beating Champions Wollongong twice.

I am disappointed with the Spirit and I hope sweeping changes are in place for this troubled club next season. The community has given them support for far too long without results and it is time that all associated, raised their hands to be counted.

N. King
Epping, NSW

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

To all our most valued readers, please take serious note of the following:
a) As from our very next issue, ABSW has been forced to remind you all, that your letters in future must be very concise, sharp and to the point. (This in future will be very strictly enforced).
b) Over the past four months or so, we have been receiving far too many letters that, (most regrettably), have been ridiculously lengthy which has forced us to scrap them.
c) It goes without saying, ABSW will NOT publish any material sent in that is blatantly defamatory, irrespective whether the reader's opinion has merit or not.
d) Please keep your letters as intelligent free of malice and clear as possible, correctly researching your facts before putting pen to paper.
e) "Letters To The Editor" received AFTER any Friday, will NOT be published in the following week's edition of ABSW.
Therefore send your letters in early ... Please.
f) Full name, address and contact number MUST also be included on all letters submitted.

Yours in Sport,
ABSW - Editor.

COFFS HARBOUR AND OZ SOCCER FUTURE

Dear Editor,

As Australia kicks-off her 2002 World Cup qualifying campaign in Coffs Harbour, I think it is noteworthy to draw attention to the fact that the future of Soccer as a crowd-pulling code in our country, rests on the shoulders of our national players.

Fact is, everyone keeps on moaning about the lack of huge turnouts and attendances at soccer games in the NSL, but no one cares to link it with Australia's inability to appear on the world stage i.e. the World Cup finals.

The problem definitely does not lie with the players, who I believe are as good as any you can find anywhere in the world. No matter how good they are however, it is detrimental to their interest as well as the growth of the game in Australia, that our national team has consistently failed to make it to the World Cup finals, since 1974.

In other codes like footy and cricket, Australia has carved a niche for herself on the 'world stage', as a superpower. The Wallabies and Kangaroos are feared and respected around the 'world', and are almost always the teams to beat. Same thing applies in cricket where the likes of Shane Warne, Steve Waugh and Glenn McGrath have successfully established Australia's reputation as a world-beater.

Steve Waugh: Helped to boost Australia's reputation in cricket.

The same might not be the case in soccer, due to the obvious strength of the South Americans and European nations. However, the least that Australia could do to earn respect is to qualify for the world cup finals.

Any nation which cannot make it to the world cup, clearly cannot lay any claim to prowess in whatever code.

Accordingly, Frank Farina and his troops should understand that the qualifiers in Coffs Harbour are the surest way of triggering and sustaining interest amongst Australians in soccer — if only Australia makes it to South Korea/Japan 2002.

Andrew Kimble,
Wallsend, NSW.

'Mysterious' Good Oil

Dear Editor,

Who is the current coach in the NSL that could be leaving his post to take over the Ivory Coast National team??

This is the question that I am sure thousands of readers want to know, but for some reason or another Mr Economos wants to keep it a mystery.

I also remember a few editions ago, Mr Economos asked us which highly credentialled unemployed Coach was caught having a BBQ and cutting the grass three times the other weekend??

I always read 'The Good Oil' because it is the only informative 'gossip' column of its type in Australian Soccer and because Mr Economos seems to know things that are going to happen before they do.

But why does he keep all these secrets and tease the readers?? Is he trying to show everyone how clever he is?

Please let us know these secrets Mr Economos, or are some of them to deep to reveal.

Ian Foster
Adelaide, SA

● Editors Note: ABSW believes he does this for colour and intrigue.

Past errors afflicting Oz soccer (2)

Dear Sir,

Should Soccer Australia be serious in their intentions towards placing the code in its rightful place, that is amongst the elite of Australian Sport I propose that the following recommendations be carried out.

1. Revamp NSL

Reduce the current NSL competition to 12 teams for 2001/2 season as this will get rid of any dead wood. Expand the league to 14 as from 2003/4 season when relegation and promotion would come into effect. Introduce a 14 team second division as from October 2001, consisting of teams also from NT & TAS with the two top teams promoted to the A league and the two bottom teams from the A league relegated to the Second Division (a two year establishment period would be put in place in order to allow the newly formed Second Division clubs sufficient time to strengthen their supporters base increase public awareness, gain extra sponsors, finance etc.

2. Introduce a National Cup

Similar to the Australia Cup of the 60s (based on the English FA cup model) this would compensate for the short season of the A league, unless SA plans to extend the league at a later stage. Providing of course its set up in high profile with the final possibly held in Japan to run on a similar line as the Toyota Cup. This would involve Oz and Asian champions which would not only give international exposure to Oz clubs but in the long term could become a good money spinner.

3. Put into place a marketing strategy

No effort must be spared in putting into place a marketing strategy unparalleled in this country as increasing public awareness is the essence of any business principle.

4. Devise an advertising and promotional campaign

This is a MUST, exposure represents a significant element in the advertising and promotional world. Necessary steps should be taken to lure disenchanted supporters from other sports such as Rugby League, Basketball, Baseball etc. All attempts should be made to secure national exposure possibly on Pay TV, SA should consider approaching Foxtel in order to set up a channel exclusively for soccer similar to the Optus NRL channel providing of course that it does not contravene with Channel 7 TV rights.

5. Introduce an incentive match payments for NSL clubs based on players performance & public response

Lets say for the purpose of the exercise that a basic match payment in the NSL would be $1000 for a win and that the first home game would attract 5,000 spectators this would be the basis of the incentive mechanism — In Game 2 if attendance would increase by 2,000 (7,000) this means that the basic match payments would be increased by 40% since the match attendance increased by 40% from Game 1 to Game 2. Should however Game 3 or any other Games fall under Game 1 (5,000) than the basic match payments = $1000 would apply.

6. SA should encourage NSL clubs in importing high profile players

SA should do everything in their power to encourage the clubs in importing high profile players of international stature recently retired or on their twilight of their career capable of attracting multi million dollar sponsors of the calibre of a Cantona or a Baggio. This could do wonders to the credibility of the game which in addition to increasing crowd support at home matches would also be instrumental to increasing crowd support when playing away from home which in the long term would be beneficial to the league as a hole!

7. More emphasis in developing young players skills

This is a very important area that for far too long we have brought up our players of the future with a related English stile of play, its high time to recruit youth coaches of a South American blend.

I remember meeting with Ricardo Campana in 1995 arguably the greatest ball player ever to grace Australian Soccer, and his view is that than given the physical and stamina ability that young Australian possess, with capable coaches that can instil young players at a very early age with the skill that South American possess, Australia could become a world force.

In the not too distant future Ricardo Campana has always expressed his desire to return to Australia, nowadays runs a skills soccer clinic in Buenos Aires for players under 12.

Gentleman its time that we put our personal differences and ambition aside, and work collectively for the benefit of the code in offering the upcoming players a better future in this homeland, maybe achieving this will uplift our soccer prosper!

Claudio Barbato,
Canada Bay. NSW.

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

CHEERS TO THE JETS

Perth Glory has a lot to answer for! That statement has nothing to do with Perth's "kidnapping" of Adelaide City Force's goal grabber in chief, Damian Mori.

Nothing insidious is implied, rather, Perth Glory stands accused of being an instant, virtually overnight, success and in being the pacesetters which all ambitious soccer clubs admire.

The latest club to take a leaf from the Perth Glory school of management marketing manual is South Australian Premier League club, Modbury Jets.

Modbury president, Denis Donovan, unashamedly admits that his Jets are using the Glory blueprint to advance the image of his club and to propel it to greater heights.

Free beer for the punters, a "Jet Hanger" to encourage massed support, bargain priced pre-game meals, reduced priced family passes and a massive letter-box drop to homes surrounding the Modbury Soccer Club are just some to the ideas borrowed from the NSL richest club.

"It is a bit of plagiarism, but why not copy the successful formula adopted by Perth Glory?" Donovan asked.

"Whatever we can do to attract more people to games can only be good for football in general and of course for our club."

Perhaps it was the appearances in training of 2000 Olympics contestants, Italy, Nigeria, Spain, Honduras, USA and Korea at its jazzed up Golden Grove ground that motivated the desire to attain a higher level of public approval.

Ex-Adelaide City Force striker, Damian Mori (left), now making waves with Perth Glory.

The Jets tasted their greatest achievement last season when they fought their way to the Premier League grand final, losing out to the rampant Blue Eagles.

There was a double success under coach Duane Gray when former Adelaide City defender Mark Yates won the Sergio Melta Medal as the best SA player.

Topping those efforts will be no easy assignment, but the management team has decided that increased crowds at home matches for season 2001 would be a great way to start.

Retention of Friday night home fixtures at Golden Grove Reserve was a logical step with the introduction of free beer for the first hour and the installing of the "Jet Hanger" crowd-drawing, crowd-pleasing innovations.

It all got under way last Friday night before the Modbury-Blue Eagles grand final rematch "Jet Air Traffic Control Caravan" parked behind the "Jet Hanger"

When the free beer keg expired, $2 pints were offered for the first hour before kick-off. Meals priced at $6 were available , while a $10 admittance ticket and meal package was available for away fans.

AMAZING DOUBLE

Wollongong resident Malcolm Rowney is believed to hold the unique distinction of being the sole person to be present at the two NSL games when 13 goals were scored.

The "Wolf Wire" column in the Wollongong Wolves match program reported that Rowney was in the crowd at Adelaide's Olympic Sports Field back in 1977 when Adelaide City defeated Victorian club Mooroolbark 10-3.

The Wolves fan also was at WIN Stadium when his club thrashed Newcastle United 9-4 when those clubs contributed to matching that long standing goal glut.

What are the odds of anybody else being present at both matches? If there are others, ABSW would be keen to hear from them.

HOT TICKETS

The touring Australian netball team which completed a 3-0 Test series sweep over England last Sunday, were guests at Old Trafford for the Manchester United-Bayern Munich first leg European Cup quarter-final.

How did the local girls land these hot tickets? Well, former Adelaide Thunderbirds goal attack Tracey Neville is sister to United players, Phil and Gary.

Tracey Neville, who was in the opposing England team, not only arranged for the Aussie girls to see the match, but also invited them to a post-match shin-dig at Neville's place.

We are still waiting to hear if an eagerly anticipated meeting with Manchester United superstar and England captain David (Becks) Beckam and his wife Victoria (Posh Spice) took place.

UPSETS

Premier League first round action produced its share of upset wins with Campbelltown Red Devils downing fancied Croydon Kings 3-1, while White City Warriors toppled Playford Patroits 2-1 at Ramsay Park.

The Warriors struggled through the pre-season SA Summer Series, but the reason for the revival when the nitty gritty league competition started is not hard to find.

The big difference this time was that former Socceroo and Adelaide City sweeper Milan Ivanovic took to the field in his role as the Warriors player-coach.

AMATEUR KICK-OFF

SA's Amateur League season is off and running with seven Sunday divisions and two Saturday divisions, plus reserve divisions in full flight.

Coca-Cola Cup Preliminary Round: Polonia 2, Postel 3; South Coast 3, Gawler 0; Mt Barker 2, Valley View 5; Croydon Cougars 0, Northern Wolves 0; Tea Tree Gully 7, Munno Para City 0; Croatia 5, Imbros 1; Brahma Lodge 0, Sturt Marion 1; Aguila 1, Omonia 2; Royal Park 0, Blue Eagles 0; Southern Knights 5, Murray Bridge Utd 0; Modbury Vista 0, The Cove 4; Croydon Utd 2, Nth Districts 3; Bosna 8, West End 0; Strathalbyn 5, Salisbury Utd 2; MA Hawks 12, Victor Harbor 0; Salisbury City 3, Noarlunga Utd 10; Para Hills Lions 0, IASC Pumas 3; Greenock Town 2, Man Utd Supporters 3; El Salvador 4, Central City 1; Seaford 3, Payneham Utd 1.

Saturday Div 1. Reserves in brackets. Adel Old Boys 1, Adel Uni 2 (0-3); Monarchs 3, St Peters 1 (1-2); Old Ignatians 4, Stirling 0 (3-1); Bosa 4, Flinders Uni 2 (0-1); Comets 6, Hahndorf 2 (4-1).

Sunday, Div 1. Salis Inter 2, Eliz Vale 2 (3-0); NAB 2, Eliz Field 2 (1-4); Salis Villa 1, Fulham 2 (0-11); Macedonia 1, Eastside 1 (1-1); Eliz Grove 0, Eliz Downs 6 (0-5).

Sunday, Div 2. Parafield Gdns 1, P/Hills East 5 (0-5); Budapest 2, Lion 2 (2-2); P/Hills West 3, The Pines 2 (1-0); Ingle Farm 2, Salis Florina 4 (0-5); West Beach 1, Limnos 1 (2-1).

Allan Crisp can be heard on the Marshall Thompson, Pacific Real Estate 5RPH (1197AM) Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7am-8.30am, along with Croydon Kings coach Phil Scardigno, Peter Millar, The Advertiser Soccer writer Meno Toutsidis and producer Rob Popplestone.

The gang reconvenes for the 5RPH "SOS Soccer On Sunday Show, along with John Perin each Sabbath from 8.30am-9.30am.

South Australia Premier League Results

ROUND 2

Modbury Jets	0	Blue Eagles	0
Port Lion Pirates	0	Adelaide City	5
		(Filewood 3, Thompson, Karlovic),	
White City	3	Port Pirie Spirit	1
(Pavanello, McMillan, McDonald)		(Christopoulos)	
Metro Stars	3	Olympic FC	0
(Schmizzi 2, Day)			
Campbelltown City	2	Playford Patriots	1
(J. Barbaro, tog).		(Farncombe).	
Raiders	2	Croydon Kings	0
(Gagliardi 2)			

STATE LEAGUE

Cobras	1	Western Strikers	4
(Skroumbros)		(Perotta 2, Babia, Chrisohoidis).	
Salisbury Apaches	1	Birkalla	4
(Robson).		Westervelt 2, Tsekinis, Hagias).	
Northern Demons	0	Noarlunga	1
		(Still)	
Seaford Surfers	1	Enfield Falcons	2
(Maguire)		(Leet, Carmen)	
Hills Hawks	0	Para Hills	2
		(Mulady, Kelly)	
Cumberland Foxes	6	Panthers	1
(Coombs 5, Mitchell)		(Honeysett)	

ROUND 3

PREMIER LEAGUE

Port Lion v Modbury Jets
Blue Eagles v Metro Stars
Port Pirie Spirit v Campbelltown City
Olympic FC v White City Warriors
Adelaide City v Croydon Kings
Playford Patriots v Raiders

STATE LEAGUE

Noarlunga Bulldogs v Seaford Surfers
Birkalla v Northern Demons
Cobras v Salisbury Apaches
Para Hills Knights v Cumberland Foxes
Enfield Falcons v Hills Hawks
Western Strikers v Panthers

WANTED: SOCCER NEWS

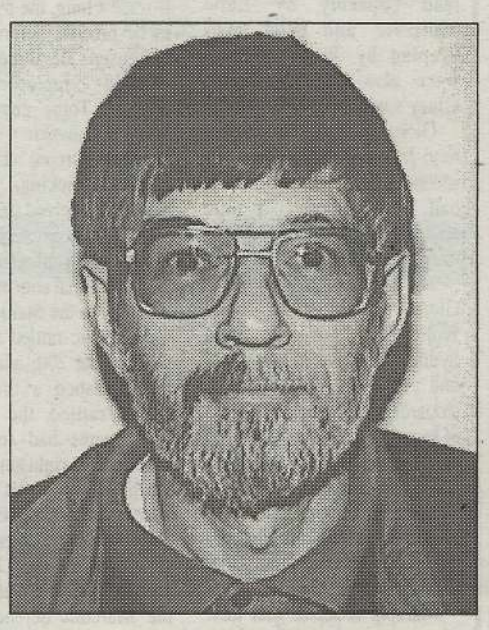
Bill Murray from Latrobe University and Roy Hay from Deakin University are currently engaged in writing a social history of Australian soccer, assisted by a grant from the Australian Research Council.

Recently the State Library of Victoria has approached Roy Hay to microfilm his holdings of the soccer newspaper Soccer News and the handbooks of the Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association and the Victorian Soccer Federation.

In order to make this exercise as useful as possible to future generations of people interested in the history of the world game in Australia, Hay seeks your assistance to fill the remaining gaps in his collection before the microfilming begins.

If you have old copies of Soccer News from the 1920s onwards or other soccer newspapers and are prepared to lend them to Roy Hay so that they can be copied, will you please contact him at 85 Fairway Crescent, Teesdale, Victoria, 3328 or telephone on 03-5281-5468 or 0419-572961. Material lent will be copied and returned as soon as possible.

If you have material you want to dispose of completely please let him know as well, for it is hoped to build up an archive of soccer material for the benefit of soccer lovers and historians.



Roy Hay: Conducting research into the social history of Australian Soccer.

Roy Hay would like to acknowledge the assistance he has received from people involved with the game including Don Sutherland, Eric Heath, Ted Smith, John Punshon and many others, plus the National Library of Australia and the Victorian Soccer Federation.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
SYDNEY UNITED 1

By Bert Van Bedaf

An unshackled Con Boutsianis and a free-flowing South Melbourne produced as many goals in one match as it managed in their previous three matches as it over-ran Sydney United 3-1 at Bob Jane Stadium last Wednesday night.

Fined $20,000 and put on a two-year good behavior bond by a Victorian County Court only days earlier, as well as escaping a custodial sentence and a conviction, for his part in a robbery three years ago, South's controversial striker and debuting Socceroo dazzled as never before.

Together with a starring side, Boutsianis produced chances galore. So many, in fact, South coach Mike Petersen could afford to laugh off a missed penalty in the final stages as well as a host of squandered opportunities.

Credit goes to the Bravehearts who did not come to Melbourne looking for a point like so many teams before them but played an attacking game in pursuit of a win and a top six position. That they failed in their endeavor is no shame against a slick South that had left skipper Paul Trimboli and defender Fausto De Amicis out of the side and Vaughan Coveny on the bench for the capable Patrick Kisnorbo, experienced Zeljko Susa and menacing Vas Kalogeracos.

United coach Velimir Kupresak conceded that playing an open game against South held it dangers. It had cost his team a point in the end, but the former Victorian player of the year, with St Albans in 1989, said his side was not the type to play defensively.

He said once United equalised, it was still in the match with a good chance. "We had the chance to go 2-1 up, but the second (South) goal was the killer for us and after it was 3-1 we could not change the game," Kupresak said.

"South Melbourne deserved to win. It has the best defence in the league and at this moment they are the best team in the league," he said.

He said he still rated United a chance for the top six. "We still have a chance, but we'll need to win all of the last four games." he said.

South coach Mike Petersen said he wasn't concerned with the number of chances wasted. "We could have had a few more (goals), but their 'keeper made some spectacular saves. I'm happy we're creating chances and we create (them) by design. That's what football is all about rather than scoring from bingo type chances," he said.

Petersen said South was close to securing the double spot or even the minor premiership. "We need one more win to secure a spot in the top two and two wins to secure the minor premiership,' he said.

For the first time in a long time, South Melbourne took an early lead.

Too often, South has been sweating on the opening goal at home as it battled away against a defensive wall, but this time it took seven minutes for South to slice through the United defence.

Simon Colosimo scattered the Bravehearts with a long pass wide to Vas Kalogeracos on the right. The forward crossed to the centre in front of goal just outside the box, where Andy Vlahos nodded down a bouncing header that disappeared behind Brett Hughes on the left.

However, United pushed forward and was rewarded in the 26th minute.

Richard Plesa took a free-kick which was deflected in the South defence.

Nahuel Arrarte won a clear passage on goal but stranded on Michael Petkovic. The Socceroo 'keeper blocked the ball but it fell for Solomon Islander Commins Menapi, who poked in the equaliser at the far post.

United was centimetres away from grabbing the lead a minute later, when Goran Talevski outmuscled Kisnorbo and shot beyond Petkovic but just wide of the far post.

South emulated the near-miss in the 35th minute, going only a whisker from regaining the lead. Goran Lozanovski went on an individual run that took him to the edge of the box. He had the goal in sight, but his left-foot kick was smothered and ambled just outside the post.

South regained the lead two minutes from half time. Lozanovski curled a free-kick into the box and Con Boutsianis struck the net with an emphatic header.

South Melbourne's Con Boutsianis, who helped increase the goals' tally against Sydney United, last week.

Five minutes into the second half, Boutsianis played Kalogeracos free on goal with a cheeky back-heeler. Kalogeracos ran into the box and slotted South's third goal home underneath the body of a desperate Hughes, among United's best, trying to close the South striker down.

The Bravehearts had their chances but found Petkovic in their way. Off to Coffs Harbour, Petkovic palmed Menapi's angled shot for a corner and stuck out a leg to deny Aytek Genc around the hour. Menapi also headed wide a Kain Rastall cross in the 66th minute.

South cut loose but wasted many chances late in the second half.

Boutsianis lobbed Hughes but aimed over the bar, while substitute John Anastasiadis headed wide from close range after Vlahos had provided him with the cross.

South captain for the occasion, Steve Panopoulos could afford to hit the post with a penalty in the 83rd minute, after substitute Milan Bosnar had brought down Vlahos, while Coveny, on for Lozanovski in the 72nd minute, hit the side-netting on the rebound.

Hughes also prevented another goal, saving a Boutsianis header three minutes from full time, and pushed another Anastasiadis header over the bar with a spectacular dive.

MARCONI STALLIONS 0
PERTH GLORY 2

By Joe Russo

Two goals that really came from nothing were enough to seal this most important victory for Perth Glory. However, great defence by the Glory, lead superbly by Lubo Milicevic, and good goalkeeping by Jason Petkovic were also key factors in Glory's win.

Glory were able to negate a mini Marconi onslaught in the second half but after the first half, in which both goals were scored, the horse had well and truly bolted for Marconi.

The three points bring Perth Glory into line with Wollongong Wolves and Sydney Olympic in joint second place but the loss really jeopardises Marconi's chances of securing a top-six berth. The pressure will well and truly now be on the Stallions.

It was an exciting game with a wide variety of chances falling for both teams but sadly for

Marconi it seems that their supporters have abandoned the team in droves. Just over 3,000 spectators turned up on a perfect Saturday night evening for soccer. The equivalent fixture in Perth would arguably have attracted four to five times that crowd.

Of more concern to Marconi coach, Eddie Krncevic, must be his team's impotence in front of goal - they have failed to score in their last three outings.

Panic seemed to have taken over the Stallions camp as at half time James Afkos, ex Perth Glory, and John Gibson were replaced by the talented Vlado Zoric and John Maisano. It wasn't long, the 59th minute to be precise, before Marconi had used all three of their allowed replacements - Norman Tome came on for Kris Trajanovski.

After Marconi had done the early attacking, Alastair Edwards received the ball from Bobby Despotovski in the 14th minute and, out of nothing, a weak diagonal shot ended up in the back of the Stallions' net.

Milicevic rattled the woodwork in the 20th minute when he unleashed a thunderbolt, which rattled the crossbar. Both teams had some more chances but right on half time Perth Glory dealt Marconi what turned out to be the killer blow. A quickly taken free kick ended up with Gary Faria having the ball at his feet and, with the Marconi defence caught napping, his lethal shot ended up in the back of the net.

The second half saw some great football despite the fact that neither team scored. In the 54th minute Brendan Renaud's superb shot was well turned onto the crossbar by an excellent Petkovic.

Only a minute later a Renaud cross found Royce Brownlie but his shot from close range was just over.

In the 61st Despotovski found Nick Mrdja but his shot was only just turned wide by 'keeper Turnbull.

A minute later both teams should have scored but didn't. Deans left a Kasey Wehrman cross for his teammate Mrdja but his close-range shot hit the crossbar. Marconi collected the rebound and it was Tome who found himself one on one with Petkovic but the brilliant Glory 'keeper turned theball wide of the net.

Tome was arguably Marconi's best player in the last twenty minutes with close attempts in the 74th (header saved off the line), 81st (shot just wide) and 84th minutes (shot well saved by Petkovic). However, it wasn't to be for Tome or Marconi and now the Stallions must really work overtime to remain in the top six and secure a play-off berth.

Jason Petkovic: Glory's goalkeeper who prevented Marconi from finding target.

CANBERRA COSMOS 7
EASTERN PRIDE 1

By Graham Cooke

On paper there was one winner – and a big one at that – as Canberra Cosmos thrashed a team of raw youngsters put out to represent Eastern Pride 7-1 at Bruce Stadium on Saturday night.

The Cosmos were losers also; at least in the eyes of coach Mike Milovanovic, for not pressing home their advantage more ruthlessly, especially in the first half which produced just two of the goals, and because the uncertainty surrounding the game kept what officials were hoping would be the club's biggest home crowd of the season to a modest 1,996.

Milovanovic was obviously choosing his words carefully – and was quick to praise the Pride youngsters. "They acquitted themselves very well, they are a credit to their club and their area," he said.

However the words "farce" and "mockery" came to mind as he described the path soccer appeared to be taking in this country.

The Cosmos took 18 minutes to get going. Alex Castro, who had earlier sent a shot against an upright skipped past a lunging tackle from Matt McDermott and crossed for Milton Cortes to flick past goalkeeper Anthony Phassouliutis.

Just past the half hour, Stephen Kemp lifted a free kick deep into the Pride penalty area and Con Anthopoulos sneaked in unseen at the far post to head home.

The Cosmos fans had to wait until 11 minutes into the second half for the third, Cortes making full use of a pass from Jon Angelucci to effectively end the game as a contest.

The Pride youngsters were beginning to feel the effects of NSL football, with several going down with cramp, meanwhile Canberra were piling on the pressure as substitute Paul Ivanic, set up by Angelucci, scored his first goal for the club.

Cortes completed his hat trick in the 73rd minute and Ivanic, obviously enjoying his introduction to the National League, grabbed his second with a well-placed shoot from the edge of the penalty area.

There was a flurry in stoppage time: Cortes made it 7-0, but almost at once Pride's Leo Trebbia ensured that if this was to be the Victorian's last game, they would go out on a scoring note by striking from 35 metres against the under-worked home defence.

Milovanovic said his team had not put enough effort or imagination into the first half. "If they had brought their first team tonight it might have been a different story," he said.

Robbie Hooker: Canberra Cosmos captain and hard tackling defender.

"Poor finishing let us down badly and I am livid about the dumb goal we gave away."

As for the Pride, their management refused to meet the media after the game – an offence under league regulations that could attract a fine – but given the situation in which the club now find themselves, it hardly seems to matter.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
FOOTBALL KINGZ 3

By Arvind Hickman

The Auckland Kingz have pushed a last ditch claim for the top six with a smart 3-1 victory at Parramatta Stadium last Friday night.

The Kingz never really dominated play but were led by the clinical finishing of Dennis Ibrahim who netted two goals.

The Power had many chances but found it hard to crack the Kingz' experienced defence, which left the Power often found wanting in their finishing.

After the impressive away result, Kingz' Assistant Coach Shane Rufer, vowed that there was a mathematical chance his team would fight for a finals berth.

"I'm obviously very pleased with the three points but not the way we played.

I don't think our ball speed was very good and too many defenders were running with the ball," he said.

"It's a very positive sign if you're playing badly and win. There is still a remote chance of making the top six so we just have to believe in that and take one game at a time."

Power Coach, David Mitchell, was left to rue at his teams' many missed opportunities.

"That's been the story of our season, one costly error. He's had a really good game, Liam (Reddy), and he's made one silly mistake and it's cost us really," he said.

"I think there was a few chances there we should have scored with big Luke (Roodenburg) missing one from ten metres out and Joe Miller had a one-on-one which was saved, overall the second goal killed us really."

Parramatta started off the more positive of the two teams and had the first genuine opportunity.

An indirect free-kick was awarded in the box and Steve Berry teed up Joe Miller who blasted the ball onto the crossbar from only six metres out.

The Kingz scored first against the run of play in the 14th minute after goal machine Dennis Ibrahim headed a sweeping cross from Gerard Davis into the back of the net.

Dennis Ibrahim: Got another brace.

Luke Roodenburg then missed a clear cut chance before scoring the equaliser in the 31st minute. Miller passed to Roodenburg down the right side of the box, the bustling striker cut in and ran past Chris Jackson before slotting it through the legs of 'keeper Julio Cuello on the near post.

Joe Miller then had a one-on-one with Cuello but pushed the ball too far ahead into the path of the advancing keeper.

Ibrahim killed off the Power after clipping the ball over Liam Reddy, who was off his line in the 75th minute. The Power 'keeper was unfortunately at fault as he called for the ball but was left short.

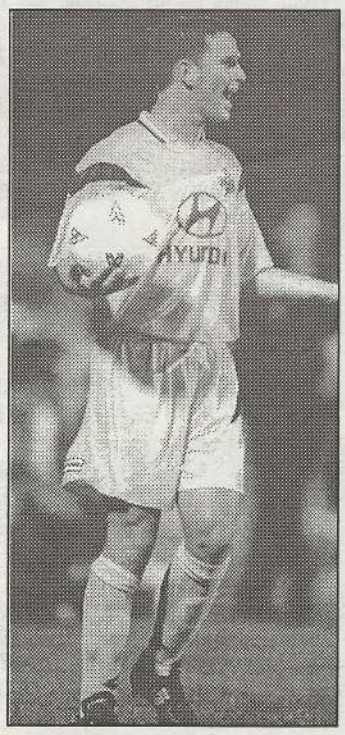
The final goal came deep into injury time via substitute Andy Bluhm who glided between two Power defenders before poking the ball home.

The win now pushes the Kingz into eighth position only three points out of the top six.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 1
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1

By Glen Davis

Nick Meredith's 250th national league appearance was one he'd rather forget after being controversially sent-off in Brisbane Strikers' 1-1 draw with Northern Spirit at Ballymore on Sunday night.



Peter Grierson: Scored for Brisbane Strikers.

Meredith, who was booked in the 22nd minute, was cautioned for the second time by Melbourne referee Perry Mur for an alleged hand-ball with 25 minutes remaining.

The Strikers justifiably believed it was a cruel decision which in the end enabled Northern Spirit to snatch an equaliser with three minutes remaining.

Northern Spirit striker Alex Moreira got his side back on level terms after curling a free kick into the top corner of the net which left Strikers keeper Corey Baldock stranded.

The Strikers had been defending a 1-0 at the time of Meredith's send-off and were under extreme pressure as the visitors pushed forward in search of an equaliser.

Up until the equaliser the Strikers had showed plenty of character and determination in the hope of finishing the season on a high after their finals hopes were extinguished last week by Auckland Kingz.

The Strikers were on the back foot for most of the game against Northern Spirit which dominated possession before the Strikers scored against the run of play in the 19th minute.

Strikers' midfielder Peter Grierson side footed home his third goal of the season after an earlier shot from Brazilian Fernando took a rebound off a Northern Spirit defender inside the box.

The Strikers were lucky not to concede an equaliser on several occasions in the second half but poor finishing cost the visitors dearly.

Northern Spirit watched three good chances go begging in the first 20 minutes after the break.

Moreira positioned substitute striker Danny Watkins perfectly in the 59th minute but the Striker's keeper pulled off a magnificent diving save.

Moreira again proved dangerous driving a powerful header in the 65th minute just past the upright and out of reach of the outstretched foot of Watkins who dived in at the far post.

Alex Moreira: Spirit's goalscorer.

Northern Spirit midfielder Troy Cranney also chimed into the act midway through the second half lofting a shot just over the cross bar as he sighted Baldock slightly off his line.

Apart from losing Meredith, the Strikers lost two key players during the game when Fernando was replaced at half time with a groin strain while Jade North limped off in the second half with a hamstring injury.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
ADELAIDE CITY 1

By Bert Van Bedaf

In a dreadfully uneventful encounter Adelaide City held home team Melbourne Knights to a 1-1 draw at Somers St last Sunday night.

It was difficult to find any outstanding among the average performances.

There were only seven shots on target and nine corners for the match, not much of an effort for a league match that enough incentive. Adelaide needed a win to get into the top six. A win for the Knights would secure a finals berth. As it was, the draw served the Knights better than the Force — but wasn't because of a show of desperation.

Not even the laconic Zoran Matic could liven up the post-match conference although he tried, saying, "For the first 20 minutes the boys were scared. They thought somebody was going to bite their legs."

On a more serious note, he said, "We needed the points but we couldn't get them. We're always playing an attacking game and this time we wanted to sit back and attack on the counter. This team is not experienced. It's a bit too naïve to play like that (on the counter)."

The Force is in danger of missing out on the finals for the first time in the eleven years Matic has been (off and on) at the club.

"It is getting harder and harder. We can't catch the Melbourne Knights and we must win one more game than Marconi (to make the finals). If we're not good enough, we're not good enough. There's no point crying over it," Matic said.

Scott Turnbridge (right) for Adelaide City Force in action, during the match between the Melbourne Knights and Adelaide Force.

The Knights took the lead in the 21st minute with a header by Toto Da Costa from a Lubo Lapsansky corner. B the Force hit back nine minutes later when Bradley Hassell launched Lucas Pentalis who levelled with a well-struck left-foot shot.

Lapsansky almost got the Knights in front again in the 54th minute with a free-kick just outside the box. The lively midfielder thundered the ball into the Adelaide City defence and glanced the rebound off the outside of the post.

City, on the counter, created a chance a minute later but Knights defender Rody Vargas saved off the line with a header while challenged by Scott Tunbridge.

"It's frustrating. Adelaide came here to defend and they did it quite well," Knights captain-coach Andrew Marth said.

In charge for his second match, following the departure of Vlado Vanis on the eve of a finals berth, Marth blamed himself for the equaliser. "I lost the ball in midfield. It was my stupid mistake," he lamented.

"Overall, I thought, our performance was quite good. The back three did well and maybe the strikers need to work a bit harder," he said.

Marth said he coped well being captain and coach. "It's not too hard at all. Training has been superb since I've taken over. The boys have responded well."

He said he was confident the Knights could finish in fifth place. "We can't get better than fifth position and I'm confident we'll get there.

The Knights may end up doing Adelaide a favor. The Melbourne side plays Marconi away in the penultimate round. Matic will be a praying for a Knights win.

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1

By Otto Bader

The Wolves were back at their best, though converting only 50% of their chances into goals. In other words squandering several clear cut opportunities with only the keeper to overcome or even worse an empty goal.

The main culprit was striker Stuart Young. However he made some very clever moves by setting his fellow strikers up to score as the Wolves, subdued Sydney Olympic 3-1 on Saturday night, watched by a considerably huge crowd of 7,988 at the WIN Stadium.

The game was a fine spectacle, great entertainment, with both sides playing open attacking football. The even match showed in corners eight for the Wolves, five for the visitors, both had openings. The first 15 minutes were even with both sides trying to dominate. The Wolves hit the woodwork first in the 25th minutes, until then both teams had shots from the distance only with the keepers able to keep a clean sheet.

A great header from Stuart Young hit the crossbar. Olympic had a goal disallowed for off-side in the 35th but eventually, the Wolves took the lead in the 38th minute when Sasho Petrovski got his head on a pinpoint cross from Alvin Ceccoli out of reach of the Olympic keeper Bojo Jevdjevic who had a great game for his side and saved them from a heavy defeat later in the game.

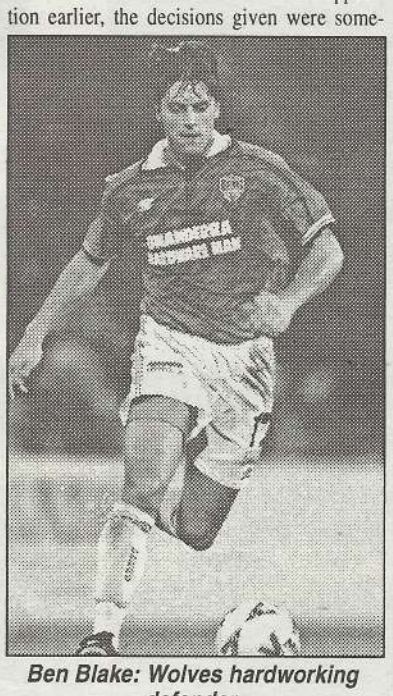
The second half had just kicked off when Robbie Stanton headed in a flicked on ball for 2-0. The Wolves started to scramble a bit for a while with the visitors throwing numbers forward.

Despite the onslaught by Olympic the Wolves were breaking out fast and several chances came their way. The Olympic keeper tipped one ball just over, another great header by Stuart Young into the net was disallowed and three more "sitters" were missed when it looked only a formality to tip the ball into the empty net.

In a goal mouth melee the linesman reported an alleged handball by a Wolves defender, not seen by the referee who was admittedly much closer. A penalty was awarded and converted for Olympic by Pablo Cardozo.

With 15 minute to go the visitors saw their chances looking much more promising until Wolves captain Matt Horsley made it 3-1 after a fast break and strong running onto a through-ball.

Wolves coach Ron Corry said this time the chances created were partly used, the side could have done better and buried the opposition earlier, the decisions given were sometimes diabolical, and the penalty never justified. He mentioned the last Wolves win against Olympic was recorded years ago, about three to four years past.



Ben Blake: Wolves hardworking defender.

Olympic coach Branco Culina was disappointed with some of his defenders, making mistakes which couldn't go unpunished by a good, team. He also mentioned that several key players were absent due to National duties, his side needed a bit more time to develop into a top outfit.

I'm Coveny's harshest critic, says wife

By Daniela Roca

Interview with Mira Coveny (wife of Kiwi International Vaughan Coveny).

PLAYER'S NAME
Vaughan Coveny
PARTNER'S NAME
Mira Coveny.

WHERE DID YOU MEET?
We met through a friend at a niteclub about ten years ago. It progressed from there.

WAS IT LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT?
Yes.

YOU WERE MARRIED ONLY RECENTLY, WAS IT A ROMANTIC PROPOSAL?
No. We had the ring designed, and with Vaughan away on soccer duty I collected the ring and then Vaughan waited until the right time to propose.

DO YOU HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAME?
Yes. I grew up watching Aussie Rules and NSL with my family. My dad is a big Bombers fan, and a keen Knights supporter. He was obviously thrilled to have Vaughan as a son-in-law!

QUICK QUIZ:

WHAT POSITION DOES VAUGHAN PLAY?
Striker.

WHAT IS THE OFF-SIDE RULE?
When a teammate of Vaughan's is kicking the ball, Vaughan has to sit behind the opposition defender.

WHO ARE THE KEY PLAYERS IN THE SIDE?
All of them — it's a team game.

HOW ARE THE BOYS DOING ON THE PARK?
Excellent — they're on top.

ARE YOU VAUGHAN'S HARSHEST CRITIC?
Yes. I'm the one that is too honest.

VAUGHAN'S NOT KNOWN FOR HIS BAD-BOY BEHAVIOUR ON THE PITCH. DO YOU CAUTION HIM ABOUT ANY ON-FIELD BIFFO?
Yes. I don't like it when someone gets hurt. It might happen to him one day, so I warn him to be careful.

IS HE THE FIRST OR LAST TO LEAVE THE CHANGE ROOMS AFTER THE GAME?
Not the first or last, but he takes his time and acknowledges the supporters that wait after a game.

RATE VAUGHAN'S SOCCER SKILLS OUT OF 10:
I'm not that qualified.

ARE YOU THE TYPICAL 'GLAMOUR' WIFE OF A SOCCER PLAYER?
Some people think so.

DESCRIBE VAUGHAN'S DRESS SENSE. IS HE THE GLAMOUR QUEEN?
I dress him, so he is!

WHAT ANIMAL (OR THING) BEST DESCRIBES VAUGHAN'S PERSONALITY?
A platypus — because it's cool and easy-going.

DOES VAUGHAN HAVE ANY HIDDEN TALENTS (THAT YOU CAN SHARE WITH US)?
He's a great housekeeper.

DID HE PLAN ANY ROMANTIC SURPRISES ON VALENTINES DAY?
No, we don't believe in it. Everyday is Valentines Day.

WHAT DOES VAUGHAN LOOK LIKE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING?
Same as the night before.

WHAT PROFESSION WOULD VAUGHAN BE IN, IF HE WAS NOT A SOCCER PLAYER?
A real estate agent, because he likes working with people and used to be an auctioneer back in New Zealand.

DESCRIBE VAUGHAN'S IDEA OF A ROMANTIC NIGHT OUT?
He'll watch Channel 13 Sports Optus Vision sitting on his beanbag, and I'll make the coffee.

WHO WEARS THE APRON IN THE HOUSE?
We share the apron. I cook and he cleans.

WHAT GOURMET CUISINES CAN VAUGHAN WHIP UP IN THE KITCHEN?
Boiled water.

WHO WOULD BE THE LAST PERSON HE WOULD LIKE TO BE STUCK IN AN ELEVATOR WITH?
Jennie Little.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING HE DOES WHEN HE ARRIVES HOME?
Checks the answering machine.

WHICH MEMBER OF THE SOUTH MELBOURNE SQUAD IS MOST LIKELY TO BE CAUGHT DANCING ON A PODIUM AT A NITECLUB?
Michael Petkovic — 'Ricky Martin'.

WHICH MEMBER OF THE SQUAD WOULD TOP CLEO'S MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELOR LIST?
Paul Trimboli.

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT SPORTSMEN?
They're binge drinkers.

DOES VAUGHAN FOLLOW ANY PRE-MATCH RITUALS?
He goes for a run at the local park before a game.

DESCRIBE VAUGHAN'S MOOD AFTER A BAD GAME?
It's like he has PMS.

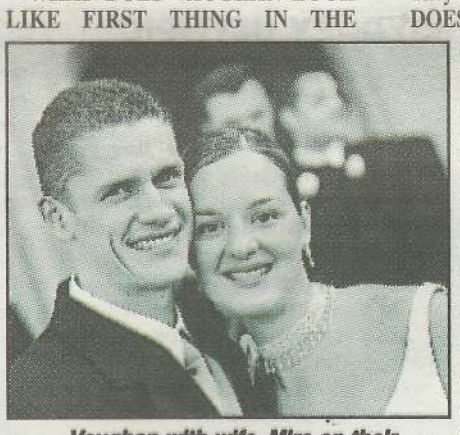
ARE YOU HIS PERSONAL NURSING AID AFTER A HARD GAME? HAVE YOU GOT THE FOOT MASSAGE DOWN PAT?
No. They have people at the club hired to do that.

IS THERE A DOWNSIDE OF BEING A 'FOOTBALL WIDOW'?
The time spent away can be difficult, especially with his international commitments.

WHEN HE IS AWAY INTERSTATE WITH THE SQUAD, HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR WEEKENDS?
Shopping, and spending time with friends.

HOW DO YOU REACT WHEN FANS YELL ABUSE AT YOUR MAIN MAN?
I don't take notice. Everyone is entitled to their opinion when they pay money at the gate.

HAVE YOU GOT A MEAN RIGHT HOOK?
I don't know, I've never tried — but, I'm sure it would be lethal!!



Vaughan with wife, Mira on their wedding day.

Vaughan Coveny: The South Melbourne star enjoying a great spell both on the pitch and at home.

FEMALE PLAYERS HIT 20 MILLION MARK!

SOCCER WOMAN By Janene Mar

Over 20 million females around the world regularly play soccer.

FIFA this week released the findings of their "Big Count" global survey, a project to quantify just how many people do play the world game, from which some very interesting figures have emerged.

We've long known men's soccer to be the biggest sport in the world. Moreover, of fascinating interest are the figures which have emerged from the female participation rates.

The proportion of female players has already reached approximately 9 percent of the total number involved.

The thing that is most encouraging about the scale of these numbers is that women's soccer is such a very young sport - really only seriously 'rediscovered' in the 1970s and later - and yet it has already achieved this much involvement.

Within its short history, women's football was so recently boosted in the greatest possible way, through its Olympics and World Cup status, bestowing it true credibility, and with it, exciting pathways for females to also share in the joys of the world game.

Yet, as encouraging as the numbers appear now, officials worldwide can ill afford to sit back and watch a further explosion happen of its own accord.

The challenge is to ensure what has happened so far, especially over these last five or six years, is not just a fad, and that the momentum is not lost.

The sport must continue to develop and hold these young players into adulthood, so that they will play out their full term, stay in the sport as coaches and officials, and encourage their children to play the game as well.

USA in particular has led the way, and much of its success can be traced back to 'Title IX', the government bill which makes it compulsory for institutions to provide at least equal opportunites, finances and resources to female sport as compared to males.

Certainly, women in certain parts of the world experience major cultural, religious or political barriers preventing them from partaking of the simple pleasures of such activities.

But overall, the scope for the potential of women's football is enthralling. As far as the sport has come so far, there is still so much untapped territory.

Overall, FIFA found that over 240 million people (males and females) play the game. That translates to one in every twenty-five people in the world!

Mia Hamm (right) prominent US female star seen here in action against Norway.

A Must Win Game,

Says Ante Juric.

By Arvind Hickman

Sydney Olympic will play host to South Melbourne next Wednesday night (18th April) in what Olympic captain, Ante Juric, believes could be a crucial encounter for the home side.

Olympic were soundly beaten 3-1 by the Wollonogong Wolves in their last game at WIN Stadium over the weekend, and will be looking for an important win to boost their top two aspirations.

They are currently placed in fourth position in a three way dogfight for second place on the NSL table.

Only goal difference separates the Perth Glory (second), Wollongong (third) and the Blues, so anything but a victory would surely give the other two an advantage for the run home.

Victory won't come easy against the best defence in the league and Souths have already shown they can travel successfully to big games with a recent win over Wollongong at WIN Stadium in Round 24.

Juric will be looking forward to the challenge against a team he maintains is arguably the best in the NSL on their day.

Branko Culina: Sydney Olympic coach.

Damon Collina:

"It is very vital to win if we are going to keep our top two hopes and stay up there, a real must win," he stated to ABSW last night.

"Alongside Wollongong they are the best team in the competition on their day."

"It is definitely tough to break them down, there will probably be one goal in it but we're confident and hopfully we can produce one and keep it tight ourselves."

"These are the games you want to play and mentally we should still be there. We know we didn't play well (against Wollongong) and that we can do alot more than that this week."

Football Kingz' goalkeeper Darren Eaddy make a vain attempt to block South Melbourne's Kiwi international striker, Vaughan Coveny.

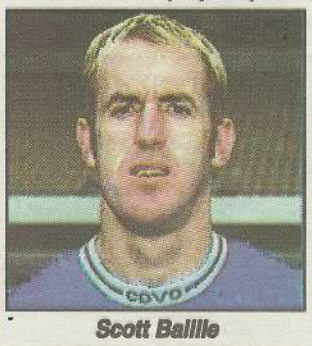
Sydney Olympic vs South Melbourne

BELMORE SPORTS GROUND

Next Wednesday Night, 18th April

Kick-Off Main Game 7.30pm • Youth League
Sydney Olympic v Marconi Colts Kick-Off 5.00pm

Ante Juric (Captain)

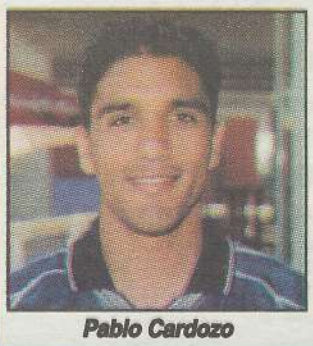


Scott Baillie

Troy Halpin

Ellas Augerinos

Kresimir Marusic



Pablo Cardozo

Winner of this match will be presented with

The Bank of Cyprus Cup

★ See the Stars ★ Under the Stars ★

Match Day Sponsor
The Bank Of Cyprus

Paul Trimboli (Captain)

Memhet Durakovic

Steve Panopoulos

Patrick Kisnorbo

Vaughan Coveny

Andy Vlahos

Sydney Olympic sponsored by DAINTREE RESTAURANT

Victorian Premier League

ROUND 10

Royals Suffer Blues

Fawkner Blues	4
Essendon	1

By David Davutovic

The quiet achievers of the league, Fawkner Blues gave Essendon its worst defeat of the season, beating them 4-1 at Epping stadium last Saturday afternoon.

It took Fawkner just fifteen minutes to take the lead through Mark Tsiorlas who fired his 15-metre diagonal shot past Mark Di Giaocchino in the Essendon goal. A classic counter attack saw Fawkner come through the midfield in droves, exposing Essendon's frailty in defensive numbers. Some intelligent passing and running from the Fawkner forwards, created space to exploit, which they did effectively.

Matthew Collina had a fine chance midway through the first half to equalise for the Royals, however Maurice Gonzales in the Fawkner goal brilliantly parried a ferocious close range header over the bar.

Essendon levelled after 36 minutes, with captain Rob Spence notching his third goal for the season. Good work in midfield by Steven Tribuzio gave Adrian Cuzzupe an opportunity to attack down the left flank. Cuzzupe found Spence just inside the box, who nodded the ball goal bound, beating an outstretched Gonzales to his left side.

Fawkner lifted the tempo and Santo Emmanuele gave the Blues the lead again fifteen minutes into the second half. Left unmarked in the box, Emmanuele smacked a close range header past Di Giaocchino and just under the crossbar.

Fawkner sealed the match ten minutes later with Emmanuele again pouncing from close range. Some assertive pressure from Fawkner pushed the play deep into Essendon's penalty box, with the Royals' defence frantically trying to clear the danger. With Di Giaocchino and Tom Markovski both having clearance attempts blocked, the ball finally bubbled to Emmanuele who fired home his second of the match.

Fawkner saved its best goal until last with Harry Matkovic firing a crisp volley past Di Gioacchino from 15 metres to secure Fawkner's 4-1 victory.

At the completiton of round 9 last week, the Royals drew 1-1 with Bulleen. It was the first match at the Veneto home ground for Bulleen this season.

The Royals were a goal in front at half time, but let the Zebras back into the game after the break.

Essendon now has two points from ten rounds to prop up the league, while Fawkner moved to sixth place and two point outside the top five.

Greens claim top spot

Bentleigh Greens	2
St Albans	1

By David Davutovic

Bentleigh Greens grabbed top of the league after knocking St Albans off the table with a 2-1 victory at home last Sunday.

Coming from behind, the Greens struck a psychological blow against the mighty Saints, who started with Mijo Trupkovic squandering two early chances. They wasted several other opportunites in a tight match. The Saints also were left with ten men, following a send-off in the last ten minutes.

Bentleigh had a chance to open the scoring in the 10th minute. Craig Lewis dribbled past Goran Mrak but struck the horizontal.

The Saints eventually did open the scoring in the 20th minute when Slavko Rados struck a 25 metre shot that was fumbled by Greens keeper Glenn Clarke and found the back of the net.

Bentleigh almost went two goals behind only five minutes later when Trupkovic took a quick free kick, releasing Ante Kelic who hammered the ball into the side netting.

The equaliser came in the 34th minute when Doug Mladenovic crossed the ball for Saso Markovski, who headed back for Lewis to slam it home from close range.

Trupkovic and Kelic again combined in the 40th minute. Trupkovic crossed for Kelic who headed against the crossbar and Ivan Zilic could only strike the rebound straight at Clarke.

Bentleigh took the lead only ten minutes into the second half when the dominant Mladenovic stole possession and released Markovski who finished clinically past Marijan Vunderl.

The Saints pushed forward for the equaliser and were left vulnerable at the back, but neither side could add to their tally, as Stelios Drakos and Theo Constantinou held their own in the Greens defence.

Burly defender Joe Cuze received his marching orders in the 81st minute after receiving his second bookable offence.

St Albans can reclaim top spot on Thursday night with a catch up match away to Bulleen Zebras. They will regain the services of Con Sianidis, who missed the Greens match with an ankle injury.

• RESULTS • ROUND 10

Green Gully Cavaliers v Port Melbourne Sharks (postponed)

Preston Lions 1
(Bosevski M)
Dandenong Thunder 2
(Ovcin B, Korcarevski V),

Essendon Royals 1
(Spence R)
Fawkner Blues 4
(Emmanuele S (2), Matkovic H, Tsiorlas M),

Altona East Phoenix 0

Bulleen Zebras 0,

Bentleigh Greens 2
(Lewis C, Markovski S)
St. Albans Saints 1
(Rados S)

Heidelberg United 2
Altona Magic 1

Bergers win thriller

Heidelberg United	2
Altona	1

By George Koukeris

Altona missed a penalty in the final stages, allowing home team Heidelberg United a 2-1 victory at Olympic Village last Sunday.

The Bergers needed to get back on to the winners' list after a poor month of results, while Altona is only three points away from the two relegation spots.

The first ten minutes produced an amazing amount of opportunities for both sides.

Heidelberg's potent forward line of Alfonzo Opazo and Nick Lazarevski combined tactfully past the defence, but the safe hands of keeper Darren McGrath prevented any early score.

Altona too created opportunities on the other

end. Sash Becvinovski had good support from Zoran Todorovski up front along with good service from Bozinovski and former NSL gun John Markovski.

In the ninth minute Altona created the best chance when Todorovski rounded keeper Jim Kourtis and was stopped on the line by Joseph Paletsides.

Becvinovski intercepted the clearance and again Palatsides stopped the shot on the line.

After a quick substitution in the 67th minute the first breakthrough arrived for the Bergers via "lately out of form" Peter Kakos. Kakos made magic from his first touch.

A free kick from 20 metres set up Kakos in the box. He diverted his shot to an unmarked Opazo, who struck past McGrath. Nine minutes latter Kakos was awarded a penalty which he converted perfectly for a first-touch winner.

In a comfortable 2-0 lead after 88 minutes, the Bergers almost collapsed in the dying moments as the Magic drillrd in their first goal and missed a penalty in the last minute that cost them a draw.

The Magic goal was a brilliant dummy by Becvinovski in front of Kourtis, leaving Bozinovski to drive the ball home.

In the last minute a final push by the Magic resulted in a penalty awarded by referee Cain Naumcevski, but Becvinovski parried the shot wide off the post.

Victorian Premier League

ROUND 11

Monday 16 April – 3.00pm
St. Albans Saints vs. Port Melbourne Sharks
Saturday 21 April – 3:00pm
Dandenong Thunder vs. Heidelberg United
Sunday 22 April – 3:00pm
Fawkner Blues vs. Altona East Phoenix
Altona Magic vs. Essendon Royals
Sunday 22 April – 6:00pm
Green Gully Cavaliers vs. Preston Lions
Monday 23 April – 8:15pm
Bulleen Zebras vs.Bentleigh Greens

For more information, log onto
www.soccervictoria.org.au

VIC PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER
(AFTER ROUND 10)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
Bentleigh Green	**10**	**6**	**2**	**2**	**19**	**7**	**20**
St. Albans Saints	9	6	1	2	15	8	19
Port Melb. Sharks	9	6	0	3	22	13	18
Heidelberg United	9	5	1	3	10	6	16
Altona East Phoenix	10	5	1	4	14	15	16
Fawkner Blues	10	3	5	2	12	10	14
Green Gully Caval'Rs	9	4	2	3	14	13	14
Preston Lions	10	3	2	5	8	13	11
Bulleen Zebras	9	2	4	3	8	8	10
Altona Magic	9	2	4	3	10	11	10
Dandenong Thunder	10	1	4	5	9	21	7
Essendon Royals	10	0	2	8	8	24	2

QUEENSLAND SOCCER FEDERATION

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PREMIER LEAGUE WRAP-UPS By Glenn Davis

By Glenn Davis

Pine Rivers lost the battle of the newly promoted clubs in the Queensland Premier League when they went down 1-0 at home to Easts on Saturday night.

Pine Rivers, once of the league's strongest clubs a decade ago, were readmitted to the premier league this season along with Easts after both clubs were relegated several years ago.

Pine Rivers coach Steve Dolan was looking forward to the clash in anticipation of picking up their first win of the season before Easts midfielder Matt Hughes scored after only six minutes.

Hughes made a penetrating run from midfield to confront Pine Rivers keeper Peter Underhill in a one-on-one situation before calmly slotting home the only goal.

The goal was the only chance Hughes took in the game after missing with three easy chances which would have provided Easts with a comfortable win.

Dolan is now faced with a daunting task to lift Pine Rivers to their first win with their next two games against leaders Brisbane City and Brisbane Lions.

"It was a tough game but it was made that much harder when we conceded so quickly after the start," Dolan said.

"So many things just went wrong for us on th night and under circumstances you can't expect to win games.

Easts coach Frank Byrne, in his first season as a premier league coach, believed his side showed a lot of character after being thrashed 6-1 by Wynnum the previous round.

"The score didn't reflect the closeness of the game against Wynnum," he said.

"We were down 4-1 at half-time against Wynnum but it could easily have finished up 6-all and we showed it against Pine Rivers .

Byrne rated Pine Rivers' keeper Underhill as one of the best on the park.

"It could have been a field day for us but we didn't convert our chances as Underhill had a great game," he said.

Byrne believed Pine Rivers had two chances to go to the half time break with a lead but Easts never gave the home side a chance after the nterval and easily minated.

"Super coach" Keiran Cooper and Rochedale Rovers registered their third straight victory by downing Taringa 1-0 at Underwood.

And it was big man Damien Harris who again did the damage scoring his fifth goal in three games since Cooper made a stunning, yet highly successful decision, to move the big stopper to the forwards.

Harris' goal midway through ther second half was an easy tap-in off a cross from substitute midfielder Danny Flaskas.

Flaskas, who came on for John Weatherby with half an hour remaining, also hit the crossbar in a match of few highlights.

"Taringa are a good side and although they're in the bottom half of the table they're too good a side to be considered relegations candidates," Cooper said.

"It was a scrappy game so I put Danny Flaskas on to spark some life into our game and that's what happened.

"We didn't have a good first half but we didn't panic while they tried catching us on the break mostly."

Cooper rated hard working midfielder Craig Collins as Taringa's best player.

Leaders Brisbane City had to fight hard before inflicting Wynnun first defeat of the season with a 1-0 home win.

A cross from Aaron Aldridge arrived nicely for Andrew King but his header struck the post allowing Vedran Becirbegovic to drive home the rebound in the 70th minute.

Rivals coaches Danny Wright (City) and Peter Tokesi (Wynnum) believed a draw could easily have resulted in the tight encounter.

"Wynnum could easily have snuck a draw. They're a tall strong side who seem to play old fashioned direct football and go looking for set pieces," Wright said.

"They always had us on our toes."

Tokesi believed the match was dominated by strong defences but was disappointed not to have come away with a point.

Wynnum's Scott Rocker missed a one-on-one with City keeper Scott Higgins while a Steve Foreshaw shot off a corner was brilliantly saved by by Higgins to maintain a ank sheet for the home side.

"We had our chances to equalise but overall I'm disappointed as we should have done better," Tokesi said.

At Gold Park, second half goals from Jason Boswood and Colin Hackwood gave Toowoomba an easy 2-0 win over strugglers Mt. Gravatt.

Toowoomba coach Peter Broadfoot said his side dominated the entire game.

"It could have been 6-0 in the first half," Broadfoot said.

"It's a good result as it keeps us up near the top teams on the table and we're happy because we've played our hard away games like Bundaberg."

Mt Gravatt coach Mal Bland had a different perspective on the game and claimed both Toowoomba goals were soft and came from their own mistakes.

"It was 0-0 at half time but we could have gone in at half-time leading by one and that would have put a different perspective on the second half," he said.

"Their first came came when we were pushing forward and lost possession and then made a mistake a the back and in the second goal their player had his back to the goal and turned and floated it in."

In other results, Brisbane Lions suffered their first loss of the season going down 4-2 to Ipswich Knights while Gold Coast down Bundaberg Waves 2-0.

Matt Hilli starred for Ipswich with a hatrick.

QUEENSLAND PREMIER LEAGUE

FIXTURES ROUND 7

Saturday 14th April	
B'berg Waves v IPSW Knights	7.00pm
TBA Raiders v Gold Coast	7.00pm
Eastern Suburbs v Rochedale Rovers	7.00pm
Brisbane City v Pine Rivers	7.00pm
Mt Gravatt v Taringa Rovers	6.00pm
Sunday 15th April	
Brisbane Lions v Wynnum	4.00pm

XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brisbane City	6	4	2	0	16	7	14
Wynnum	6	3	2	1	14	8	11
Brisbane Lions	6	3	2	1	17	12	11
Rochedale Rovers	6	3	1	2	14	6	10
IPSW Knights	6	2	3	1	14	11	9
B'berg Waves	6	3	0	3	14	14	9
Gold Coast City	5	2	1	2	9	11	7
T'wmba Raiders	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
Eastern Suburbs	6	2	1	3	8	14	7
Taringa Rovers	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
Mt Gravatt	6	1	1	4	12	21	4
Pine Rivers Utd	6	0	2	4	8	19	2

ROUND 6

T'wmba Raiders	2	Mt Gravatt	0
Gold Coast City	2	B'berg Waves	0
IPSW Knights	4	Brisbane Lions	2
Wynnum	0	Brisbane City	1
Pine Rivers Utd	0	Eastern Suburbs	1
Rochedale Rovers	1	Taringa Rovers	0

DIVISION 1 XXXX RESERVES

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Rochedale Rovers	6	6	0	0	13	3	18
Brisbane City	6	5	0	1	26	8	15
Brisbane Lions	6	3	2	1	14	5	11
Gold Coast City	5	3	1	1	16	6	10
Mt Gravatt	6	3	1	2	12	11	10
Taringa Rovers	5	3	0	2	7	7	9
Wynnum	6	2	1	3	11	15	7
Eastern Suburbs	6	2	0	4	10	11	6
IPSW Knights	6	1	1	4	6	17	4
T'wmba Raiders	6	1	1	4	3	14	4
B'berg Waves	6	1	1	4	4	18	4
Pine Rivers Utd	6	1	0	5	10	17	3

ROUND 6

T'wmba Raiders	1	Mt Gravatt	5
Gold Coast City	8	B'berg Waves	1
IPSW Knights	0	Brisbane Lions	0
Wynnum	1	Brisbane City	6
Pine Rivers Utd	5	Eastern Suburbs	2
Rochedale Rovers	2	Taringa Rovers	1

DIVISION 1 XXXX YOUTH

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Brisbane Lions	5	5	0	0	22	2	15
Wynnum	6	4	2	0	13	9	14
Sunshine Coast	6	4	1	1	18	9	13
Taringa Rovers	5	3	1	1	14	6	10
Rochedale Rovers	6	2	2	2	9	7	8
IPSW Knights	6	2	1	3	12	16	7
T'wmba Raiders	6	2	0	4	10	21	6
Gold Coast City	5	1	2	2	3	7	5
Brisbane City	6	1	2	3	9	14	5
Eastern Suburbs	6	1	2	3	6	11	5
Pine Rivers Utd	6	1	1	4	5	12	4
Mt Gravatt	5	1	0	4	9	16	3

ROUND 6

T'wmba Raiders	2	Mt Gravatt	3
Gold Coast City	0	Sunshine Coast	0
IPSW Knights	1	Brisbane Lions	4
Wynnum	1	Brisbane City	1
Pine Rivers Utd	1	Eastern Suburbs	2
Rochedale Rovers	1	Taringa Rovers	1

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
North Star	7	5	2	0	23	8	17
Slacks Creek	7	5	0	2	21	13	15
Redlands Utd	7	4	2	1	17	9	14
Brisbane Olympic Utd	7	4	2	1	16	9	14
The Gap	7	4	1	2	15	8	13
Souths Utd	6	4	1	1	15	9	13
Albany Creek	7	4	1	2	13	14	13
Rocklea Utd	7	3	2	2	12	13	11
Mitchelton	7	3	0	4	9	11	9
Capalaba	7	2	2	3	9	15	8
Grange Thistle	7	1	1	5	9	14	4
Newmarket	6	1	0	5	7	16	3
Acacia Ridge	7	0	2	5	7	19	2
North Pine	7	0	0	7	4	19	0

ROUND 7

Mitchelton	2	Newmarket	0
North Star	4	Rocklea Utd	2
Acacia Ridge	3	Grange Thistle	3
Albany Creek	4	Capalaba	2
Redlands Utd	1	North Pine	0
Slacks Creek	1	Souths Utd	4
The Gap	1	Brisbane Olympic Utd	2

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO Reserves

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Souths Utd	7	7	0	0	24	7	21
Redlands Utd	7	6	0	1	17	9	18
North Star	7	5	2	0	16	8	17
Mitchelton	7	4	1	2	22	11	13
Slacks Creek	7	3	1	3	13	8	10
Newmarket	7	3	0	4	16	20	9
Capalaba	7	3	0	4	10	15	9
The Gap	7	2	2	3	13	10	8
Albany Creek	7	2	2	3	10	10	8
Rocklea Utd	7	2	1	4	19	24	7
Grange Thistle	7	2	1	4	9	19	7
Brisbane Olympic Utd	7	2	0	5	14	21	6
North Pine	7	1	1	5	12	19	4
Acacia Ridge	7	1	1	5	5	19	4

ROUND 7

Mitchelton	7	Newmarket	3
North Star	4	Rocklea Utd	2
Acacia Ridge	1	Grange Thistle	1
Albany Creek	1	Capalaba	2
Redlands UTd	2	North Pine	0
Slacks Creek	1	Souths Utd	2
The Gap	0	Brisbane Olympic Utd	1

DIVISION 1 SEMI PRO Youth

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Souths Utd	7	7	0	0	41	9	21
Acacia Ridge	7	6	1	0	35	8	19
Capalaba	7	6	0	1	34	10	18
Mitchelton	7	4	0	3	16	14	12
Rocklea UTd	7	3	2	2	15	16	11
Newmarket	6	3	1	2	11	13	10
The Gap	7	3	0	4	26	20	9
Redlands Utd	7	2	3	2	15	15	9
North Pine	7	2	2	3	18	14	8
Albany Creek	7	2	1	4	15	17	7
Slacks Creek	7	2	0	5	12	29	6
Grange Thistle	7	1	0	6	12	27	3
Brisbane Olympic Utd	6	1	0	5	7	33	3
North Star	7	1	0	6	16	48	3

ROUND 7

Mitchelton	2	Newmarket	0
North Star	2	Rocklea Utd	4
Acacia Ridge	3	Grange Thistle	1
Albany Creek	2	Capalaba	6
Redlands Utd	1	North Pine	1
Slacks Creek	2	Souths UTd	6
The Gap	8	Brisbane Olympic Utd	1

NSW Youth League Results

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

GRADE 13: Bankstown City Cubs 5 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1, Sydney United 0 Penrith Panthers 0, Newcastle United 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Northern Spirit 5 Fairfield Bulls 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Leichhardt Tigers 4, Marconi Stallions 0 Sydney Olympic 1, Canterbury Marrickville 2 Macarthur Rams 0, Sutherland Shire 0 Central Coast Coasties 1, St George 2 Wollongong Wolves 0, Blacktown City Demons 8 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0.

GRADE 14: Bankstown City Cubs 5 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0, Sydney United 0 Penrith Panthers 0, Newcastle United 5 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Northern Spirit 5 Fairfield Bulls 0, Parramatta Eagles 3 Leichhardt Tigers 1, Marconi Stallions 1 Sydney Olympic 6, Canterbury Marrickville 1 Macarthur Rams 1, Sutherland Shire 3 Central Coast Coasties 0, St George 1 Wollongong Wolves 8, Blacktown City Demons 3 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1.

GRADE 15: Bankstown City Cubs 3 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1, Sydney United 1 Penrith Panthers 0, Newcastle United 2 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Northern Spirit 2 Fairfield Bulls 0, Parramatta Eagles 1 Leichhardt Tigers 2, Marconi Stallions 3 Sydney Olympic 2, Canterbury Marrickville 1 Macarthur Rams 1, Sutherland Shire 0 Central Coast Coasties 5, St George 0 Wollongong Wolves 3, Blacktown City Demons 2 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1.

GRADE 17: Bankstown City Cubs 1 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1, Sydney United 2 Penrith Panthers 0, Newcastle United 0 Manly Warringah Dolphins 2, Northern Spirit 3 Fairfield Bulls 1, Parramatta Eagles 3 Leichhardt

SUPER CADET LEAGUE

Tigers 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Sydney Olympic 0, Canterbury Marrickville 2 Macarthur Rams 2, Sutherland Shire 2 Central Coast Coasties 1, St George 0 Wollongong Wolves 1, Blacktown City Demons 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3.

GRADE 11: St George 2 Wollongong Wolves 3, Northern Spirit 4 Fairfield Bulls 2, Parramatta Eagles 2 Leichhardt Tigers 1, Marconi Stallions 0 Sydney Olympic 2, Canterbury Marrickville 0 Macarthur Rams 1, Sutherland Sharks 3 Central Coast Coasties 2, Blacktown City Demons 11 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0.

GRADE 12: St George 2 Wollongong Wolves 3, Northern Spirit 2 Fairfield Bulls 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Leichhardt Tigers 2, Marconi Stallions 3 Sydney Olympic 1, Canterbury Marrickville 1 Macarthur Rams 2, Sutherland Sharks 4 Central Coast Coasties 1, Blacktown City Demons 4 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

By Otto Bader

NO SPARK LEFT? - Coach Ron Corry is using all his international experience to re-ignite the spark-of-winning in his players. With just five games left, the Wolves must take maximum points to stay in contention for this year's championship. Ron Corry, never a man of many words, knows what is required. His team is playing attractive attacking soccer, only lately missing the vital goal or two for ultimate success. It is most likely more a mental condition of positive focus on the match at hand. Whether the boys' minds are occupied with future things to come, like travelling to Spain for the World Cup Championship, could influence the performance on match day. The fans hope their side does return to a successful winning streak quickly.

Dino Mennillo: Missed the game against Sydney Olympic due to family commitments.

SCHOOL SOCCER COACHING – Development Officer and Wolves captain, Matt Horsely is holding clinics at several local schools around Wollongong and also at Shoalhaven Heads Public School, Nowra, this week on Wednesday and Friday, in the morning and afternoon sessions. He will be assisted by first grade player Robbie Middleby, very popular with the youngsters.

MIDFIELD SCHEMER MISSING – Dino Mennillo, a 150NSL game veteran, missed the all important Wolves clash against Sydney Olympic. Family commitments took him to Adelaide forcing the coach to promote one of his fringe players. The squad available gave Ron Corry plenty of options with two replacements made since striker Scott Chipperfield was also absent on Socceroos duties.

NSL CLUBS GRADED – Soccer Australia recently released an assessment rating for next year's proposed 12 team competition. Looking at the points statistics allocated to each club, not many would be pleased with the valuation system. No wonder Wolves Chairman Joe Cachia is concerned with his club being rated eighth team, behind several struggling clubs being on the edge of extinction not only at the start of this soccer season but also previously. Some changed coaches even late in the present competition as the other week, not demonstrating much stability. The Wollongong club has won championships and proved solid with coaches staying on for many seasons. One must wonder what special criteria applies here – likes or dislikes? – to determine this most curious rating of NSL clubs. Perhaps an explanation would have helped. If it would not be serious, one could be excused to laugh at the originators of the assessment. It is expected that the Wolves will appeal to Soccer Australia.

WOLVES CLUBS – results from their clash with Northern Spirit at Brandon Park was not entirely successful. Cadets U/11's drew 1:1, U/12's lost 0-2, Youth League U/13's won 2:1, U/14's lost 0:2, U/15's lost 0:4 and U/17's lost 1:3.

ILLAWARRA SOCCER OVER THE WEEK – ICU Premier League first round results – review and preview – no huge upsets for the kick-off so far. Balgownie v Wollongong Olympic 2-2, twice leading, allowing the visitors to equalise, goals for the host Victory Costabile, Frank Barilla, for Olympic goals from jason Lewis and Steve Krishana. Balgownie meets now Coniston Lions, most dangerous opponent, Olympic plays Lysaghts next, expected to succeed.

Bulli v Coniston 1-4, not quite predicted such clear cut result, considering Bulli was level at the interval with Terry Calvert equalising an earlier lead by the visitors' Vlad Srbinovski (2), further goals from Anthony Guido and Greg Sarich, very pleasing for the Coniston coach Milcho Saveski. Bulli face now Cringila, a first round winner. Consiton face Balgownie, not easy.

Cringila v Picton 2-0: Both goals scored by Lupcho Naumovski, a fine start of the home team. Cringila play next Bulli, looking for more points. Picton meet next Port Kembla 2-6, the visitors leading 5-0 at the break, dominating play, goals from Michael Clare (2), Mineo Bonetic (2), Zvonko Usljebraka, Aaron O'Brien, the home team scored with Damien Counter (2), they play next Shoalhaven away, a difficult task. Port host Picton next.

Western Suburbs v Shoalhaven 2-2: Rather surprising, West had a player injured to be taken off, a valuable point for the visitors. West meets Kemblawarra next, need to lift their game. Shoalhaven host Northern United next.

Lysaghts v Kemblawarras 1-3: Not a good start for the host, a teenage striker Matt Parker scored a hat-trick for the visitors. The home team had a player sent off, they travel next to Wollongong Olympic, most difficult. Kemblawarra play West, hoping for points.

Holiday Goalkeeping School: Organised by Director of Goal keeping coaching Illawarra John Krajnovic, assisted by David Curley (former Australian Schoolboy representative) for Monday 23/4 to Friday 27/4 at JJ Kelly Park, Wollongong.

ICU First Division Results: Albion Park W.E. v Illawarra United 6-1, the favourite confirmed, meet next Berkeley, Illawarra I meet next Barbarians.

Tarrawanna v Highlands 4-9: Another top contender showing form, to continue next against Shellharbour City, Highlands having the bye.

Dapto v Barbarians 1-3: Great results for the visitors, coming from behind. Dapto disappointed, play now next Warilla Wanderers, while the Barbarians play next Illawarra United. Fernhill v Woonona 4-1, Not expected but welcomed by the home team who meet next Ruse. Woonona disappointed, have to do better next against South Coasty United.

University v Berkeley 3-0: The students proving value, play next Kiama, also first round winners. berkeley need strength to meet Albion Park WE next.

Helensburgh v Shellharbour City 2-0: Very close at times, the home team experienced, play next Ballambi, looking for another win.

Shellharbour City plays Tarrawanna next, a tough task.

Kiama v South Coast 4-1: Convincing win for the host who face next University, not easy. South Coast play next Woonona, looking for points.

Fernhill's Army of Kids: Around coach Ian Funnel are responding well to the challenge ahead, winning their first game 4-1. Optimism is growing with the betting odds shortening. The club's recent 75th Anniversary was a success with over 250 attending, successful team members going back to 1953 joined the festivities.

Referee's Quiz: If a ball burst in flight, where will the game be restarted? Answer: Nearest point noticed by referee.

Illawarra Juniors: Annual Gala Day started season off. Year 2000 winners were in age groups - U/10s Thirroul, U/11's Oak Flats, U/12's Albion Park, U/13's Oak Flats, U/14's Oak Flats, U/14 Girls Port Kembla, U/15's Unanderra, U/16's Unanderra, U/16's Girls Tarrawanna, U/18's Girls Woonona, U/18's Dapto. This year's game are played at 11 different soccer grounds, the finals to be played at Kiama on 4 fields.

Sponsorship: Shellharbour Workers Club President Russel Connell provided solid financial support by handing over a cheque to Shellharbour City Soccer Club President Dennis Morris, present also coach rod Haggerty and first grader Todd James.

NSW Premier League

VALENTINE SPORTS PARK

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NSW Premier League

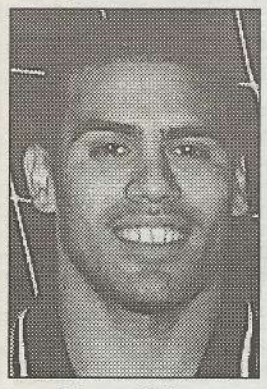
GRAND FINAL

BONNYRIGG: 2000/01 PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS

Bonnyrigg White Eagles	**3**
Blacktown City	**1**

By Stuart Veitch

Bonnyrigg White Eagles finally emerged from the shadows of arch rival Blacktown City to claim a memorable Grand Final victory by 3-1.



Johnny Ghisso: Bonnyrigg's lethal striker scored a double in the grand final.

After so much Grand Final heartbreak in recent years, the White Eagles discarded the tag of perennial bridesmaids in emphatic style.

The opening quarter hour saw the White Eagles midfield in sparkling form, with David Reid on the right and Javier Mancino in the middle both outstanding.

After 14 minutes, the move of the match saw Reid win the ball deep in his half near the right touch line. A quick pass inside found Mancino who swept the ball towards the right corner for Robbie Gomez. Gomez controlled and crossed in for David Harding to volley home.

The move served as a reminder to the Demons that while they may have won the league, Bonnyrigg was now the undisputed form team of the competition, and it was not a mantle they would easily relinquish.

The Demons had a couple of chances to equalise, most notably when Josh Maguire sent Darren Iocca through with a pass of sublime vision and technique. Bonnyrigg keeper Fernando Greco was quick to spot the danger and made a crucial block.

However, Bonnyrigg began to dominate the midfield with superior mobility and cohesion, switching and passing the ball forward with awesome intent.

Blacktown striker Jimmy Aschner appeared after half time and made an immediate impact, almost scoring within minutes but for a desperate interception from Sasha Utjesenovic, who cleared off the goalline.

The Demons looked more balanced now, and also benefited from their opponents' casual approach to keeping possession. When Maguire forced Greco into a fantastic reflex save, a Blacktown resurgence no longer seemed so unlikely.

Bonnyrigg: The inaugural Premier League Champions after defeating the Blacktown City Demons 3-1 in last Sunday's Grand Final at Marconi Stadium.

At 70 minutes, the match exploded with ill temper, resulting in the dismissal of Mancino and Foxe. Blacktown was surely disadvantaged more, being forced to combat Bonnyrigg's pace in a 10 man contest.

With the introduction of Johnny Ghisso, Bonnyrigg pressed their advantage. Teamed with Gomez up front, the speedy duo set about the final demolition of the tired and stretched Blacktown defence. Ghisso scored his first five minutes from time, and then made it 3-0 just into stoppage time.

A late consolation goal was secured when Darren Iocca put away a cross from Aschner after the first attempt by Adam Kwasnik was parried by Greco.

NSW SUPER LEAGUE

ROUND 3

Stanmore Hawks 1 AC United 0

The Stanmore Hawks notched up their first win of the Super League season with an entertaining 1-0 victory over AC United at Arlington Oval.

The Hawks clinched a 1-0 lead in the 9th minute when Eddie Briscoe found the back of the net with a thundering strike from outside the box.

In the second half United controlled the game but were unable to convert as the Hawks held on to take the points.

Bankstown City 0 Rockdale City 0

The Rockdale City Suns came out to play as they completely dominated proceedings against Bankstown City Lions yet have to go away with a 0-0 draw. This was despite having numerous chances, most notably to Spase Najdoski and Nabil Codmani.

Liverpool 1 Hajduk Wanderers 1

MSC Liverpool and Hajduk Wanderers have drawn 1-1 at Hammondville Park, when the Wanderers were only left with nine men on the field for the last minutes of the game.

Liverpool scored first when a perfect cross from Adrian Maiorca found the head of Clinton Green in the 33rd minute. In the second half Hajduk's Joe Badrov was sent off for disputing with the referee in the 55th minute.

However, in the 65th minute the Wanderers hit back when Trent Worrall was able to win a challenge with the Liverpool keeper in the goalmouth.

Richard Giometti was also sent off for Hajduk in the 86th minute for back chat and as a result Liverpool were able to relentlessly pressure the Wanderers in the last minutes of the match, but to no avail, as the Wanderers held on determinedly to save the draw.

Hurstville City 3 Manly Warringah 2

The Hurstville City Minotaurs defeated the Manly Warringah Dolphins in an enthralling contest grabbing the winner 4 minutes from fulltime.

Minotaur Nick Bolianitis grabbed a great opportunist's goal, blasting his shot past the keeper and then from a free kick Michael Kladis lifted his shot over the wall to further extend Hurstville's lead.

The Dolphins were not going to go down without a fight and came back in the second half with a great goal to Adam Snyder and then a Hurstville own goal.

The final 15 minutes saw some fiery moments coupled with some great attacking play and 4 minutes from the end Hurstville crushed the Dolphins with a fine goal to hardworking forward Evangelos Petratos who chipped the keeper to put the finishing touch on a fantastic game of football.

Fairfield Bulls 1 Dulwich Hill 4

Fans at Nineveh barely had time to get comfortable, when in the first minute Steve Karavatakis lobbed Bulls keeper Frank Mikuletic forthe opening goal.

Miraculously only one minute later, the visitors were two nil up, Eddie Wong volleying home after a superb cross from the left.

On ten minutes, Dulwich Hill had a third goal, Peter Apolevski, sprinting away with the ball to slide it under Mikuletic.

Eric Hristodoulou was to make it four as he clinically shot past the Bulls' keeper from 20 yards on 35 minutes.

The home side did respond three minutes later as Adam Mammoliti broke the off side trap to fire past Daniel Farias in the Dulwich Hill goal.

Fraser Park 3 Macarthur Rams 2

Fraser Park nearly committed football suicide when they hosted the Macarthur Rams on Sunday. Macarthur was on the wrong side of a fantastic comeback last week, and nearly reversed the scenario in a grandstand finish.

Ivo De Jesus hit a fine first half double for the Jets, the first an easy tap-in, and the second a rifled shot after a great 50-yard switch from Sean Robertson. Ben Burrows rounded the keeper in the 66th minute and increased the lead. Macarthur pulled one back in the 78th minute after Gary Newall also rounded the keeper.

And Eric Williams headed in his third this season in the 80th minute to ensure a tense last ten minutes for the home side.

NSW SUPER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 3)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dulwich Hill	3	3	0	0	9	4	9
Rockdale City Suns	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Manly Warringah	3	2	0	1	6	4	6
H'ville City Minotaurs	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Hajduk Wanderers	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Bankstown City Lions	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Fairfield Bulls	3	1	0	2	7	7	3
Macarthur Rams	3	1	0	2	6	6	3
Fraser Park	3	1	0	2	6	7	3
Stanmore Hawks	3	1	0	2	2	4	3
MSC Liverpool	3	0	2	1	5	9	2
AC United	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

For further information see: www.nswpremierleague.com

NSW Super League

NSW Premier League

www.nswpremierleague.com

ROUND 4

SATURDAY 14TH APRIL

Manly Warringah vs Fraser Park — Cromer Park
First Grade: 7.00pm

Macarthur Rams vs Bankstown City — Lynwood Park
First Grade: 7.00pm

MONDAY 16TH APRIL

Rockdale City Suns vs Fairfield Bulls — Rockdale Ilinden SC
First Grade: 3.00pm

Dulwich Hill vs MSC Liverpool — Arlington Oval
First Grade: 3.00pm

Hajduk Wanderers vs Stanmore Hawks — Hajduk Stadium
First Grade: 3.00pm

AC United vs Hurstville City Minotaurs — Abruzzi Oval
First Grade: 3.00pm

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EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

QUARTER-FINALS FIRST LEG

GALATASARAY	3
REAL MADRID	2

Galatasaray came from 2-0 down to earn a stunning 3-2 victory over Real Madrid in an extraordinary game, pulling themselves back into contention for a place in the semi-finals of the Champions League.

The Turkish side had a dreadful first half against the reigning European champions and fell behind to an Ivan Helguera header on 32 minutes.

Real then extended their lead two minutes before halftime with Claude Makelele driving in with an angled shot off a post after a Raul flick-on fell to him.

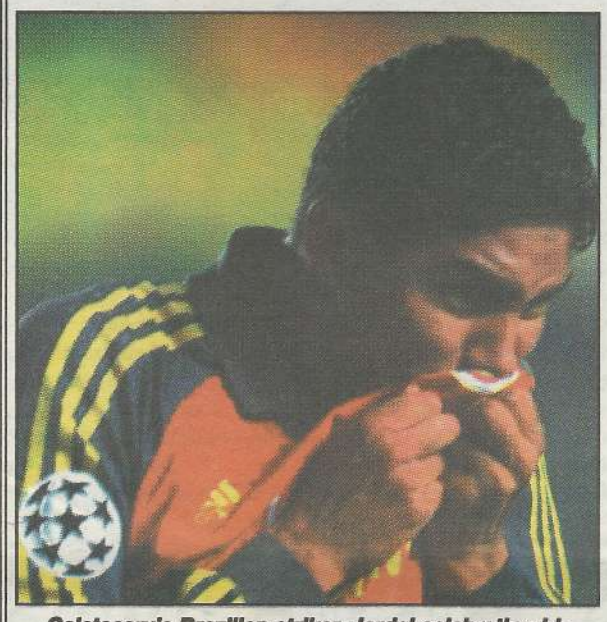
Vicente del Bosque's side must have been contemplating a semifinal against either Bayern Munich or Manchester United but Galatasaray made a stunning start to change the whole look of the tie.

Jardel put a free header narrowly wide a few seconds after the break but a minute later he atoned for his error as he won the ball in the area and passed to Hasan Sas. He was brought down by Makalele and Umit Davala scored from the resulting penalty.

Hasan brought the sides back level on 65 minutes as he turned in from a right-wing cross and Jardel gave his side the win on the night as he nodded in from a Fatih cross 15 minutes from time.

The game was held up for around three minutes as the lights in the stadium went out immediately after Jardel's goal and Real's position could have been even darker five minutes from time as the Brazilian had what would have been a fourth goal ruled out for a marginal offside.

Galatasaray defender Gheorghe Popescu was booked after 70 minutes and is suspended for the second leg in Madrid on April 18.

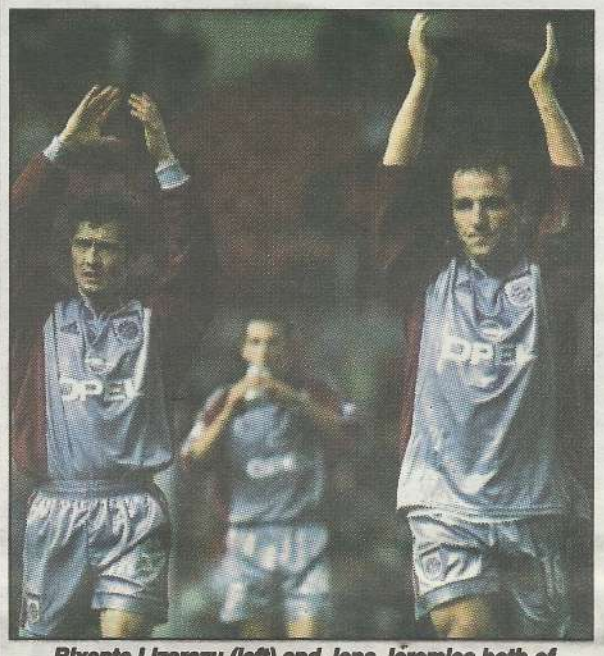


Galatasary's Brazilian striker, Jardel celebrating his match-winning goal against Real Madrid.

MANCHESTER UNITED	0
BAYERN MUNICH	1

Substitute Paulo Sergio scored four minutes from time to give Bayern Munich a priceless 1-0 victory over Manchester United in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final.

The game had been heading for a 0-0 draw when Stefan Effenberg chipped in a free kick which Thomas Linke knocked into the path of Brazilian Sergio, who had time and space to steer the ball past keeper Fabien Barthez.



Bixente Lizarazu (left) and Jens Jeremies both of Bayern Munich salute the crowd after their win over Manchester United.

There was still time for another sub, Alexander Zickler, who had earlier hit the bar, to shoot inches over as the Germans gained a small measure of revenge for United's last-gasp victory in the 1999 final at Barcelona.

United can have few complaints about the result despite looking the sharper side for much of the first half.

David Beckham, whose second booking keeps him out of the second leg, sent two free kicks high and wide, while at the other end Barthez made two key saves.

But with time running out Sergio, a 76th minute replacement for Mehmet Scholl, was left in the clear in the six-yard box to put Bayern in command.

French international defender Lizarazu said: "It is a very important result, it is not so easy to win here.

"We had good discipline tonight. It was a tough physical game, very intense, and both teams were very tired at the end.

Barthez kept United in the game from then on with two stunning saves to deflect long-range efforts from Jens Jeremies round the post. Elber was also twice denied by the Frenchman before Zickler crashed a shot against the bar.

The warning was not heeded and Sergio knocked in a winner which will put Bayern firmly in the driving seat in the second leg next week in Munich.

ARSENAL	2
VALENCIA	1

Two second-half goals in two minutes gave Arsenal a 2-1 comeback win over Valencia in their Champions League quarter-final first leg.

Goals from Thierry Henry and Ray Parlour secured Arsenal's victory but Fabian Ayala's first-half strike at Highbury will give the Spaniards, finalists last season, plenty of hope.

Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger said: "I have some regrets because we couldn't get the third goal.

We had clear cut chances but couldn't take them.

"It was important to win the game, but now we have to go there and try to win again.

Arsenal dominated the early stages, targeting Valencia's veteran right back Jocelyn Angloma as a potential weakness.

Robert Pires, Fredrik Ljungberg and Henry attacked the 35-year-old Frenchman relentlessly and created a number of attacking opportunities, one of which should have put Arsenal into the lead after 14 minutes.

Pires swung a left-wing corner to the far post where the unmarked Patrick Vieira headed against the crossbar from two metres.

The opening goal came four minutes before the interval when Ayala volleyed high into the net from six metres after Arsenal failed to clear a right-wing cross by Mendieta.

Wenger brought on Sylvain Wiltord as a halftime substitute for Ljungberg and the hosts

Arsenal levelled on 58 minutes when Wiltord's cross from the left was deftly back-heeled by Pires for Henry to lash the ball home from close range.

Parlour scored the winner two minutes later, surging through from midfield and unleashing an unstoppable shot into the top corner of the net from 25 metres.

Valencia, who had only conceded six goals in the first two phases of the competition, looked shell-shocked as Wiltord continued to cause problems.

Henry outpaced the defence and rounded Canizares, only to be dispossessed by two Spanish defenders, and the Frenchman forced the keeper into another smothering stop at the near post.

Thierry Henry about to score the equaliser for Arsenal against Valencia.

Leeds striker, Mark Viduka celebrating his team's victory over Deportivo La Coruna.

LEEDS UNITED	3
DEPORTIVO LA CORUNA	0

Leeds United look set for a place in the semi-finals of the Champions League after they demolished Deportivo Coruna 3-0 in the first leg of their quarter-final at Elland Road.

David O'Leary's side made a mockery of Deportivo's billing as tricky Spanish champions with an exhilarating display, inspired by the attacking exploits of defender Ian Harte.

He scored the first goal from a free-kick after 26 minutes and delivered the crosses for Alan Smith (51) and Rio Ferdinand (66) to head home. It was Ferdinand's first goal for Leeds since his 18.0 million pounds move from West Ham last November.

"They were all heroes, there. I only pick the team, they go out and do it. I'm delighted for them, so proud of them."

But the Spaniards still have hope. They beat PSV Eindhoven 4-3 at home after being 3-0 behind in the second group stage.

David Batty and Olivier Dacourt won the midfield battle, with Deportivo's ball winner Emerson picking up an early yellow card wich earnt him a suspension from the return leg.

Leeds had the first chance when midfielder Lee Bowyer controlled Ian Harte's sweeping11th minute ball and forced a superb save from Francisco Molina before Leeds took the lead.

Cesar fouled Alan Smith on the edge of the area and Harte's 26th minute free-kick flashed by a stunned Molina and under the bar for his fourth European goal of the season.

Temperamental Brazilian Djalminha was having one of his quiet nights and without his promptings, Roy Makaay was unable to make an impact. Leeds moved further ahead in the 51st minute as a short corner routine handed Harte the space to whip in a cross that Smith headed home from close range.

But Leeds sealed the tie in the 66th minute with Harte once again involved. His near post corner flew off the head of a sub Valeron, catching Molina badly out of position, and Rio Ferdinand nodded home through a crowd of players.

Ziege told to shut up

Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier has told unhappy Germany international Christian Ziege "to shut up" and stop complaining about not being in the first team.

"I understand he may be feeling frustrated, but the best thing he can do is shut up," said Houllier.

Ziege vented his frustration on his personal website after being left out of the starting line-up for penultimate Saturday's 2-0 Premier League win over Manchester United.

"When he says he is unhappy about not playing and thinks he should be in the team, that is showing disrespect to the rest of the team," the French coach added.

"I've advised him to keep his mouth shut. There are a lot of games coming up and he might play. He's not going to help his case by talking to the press."

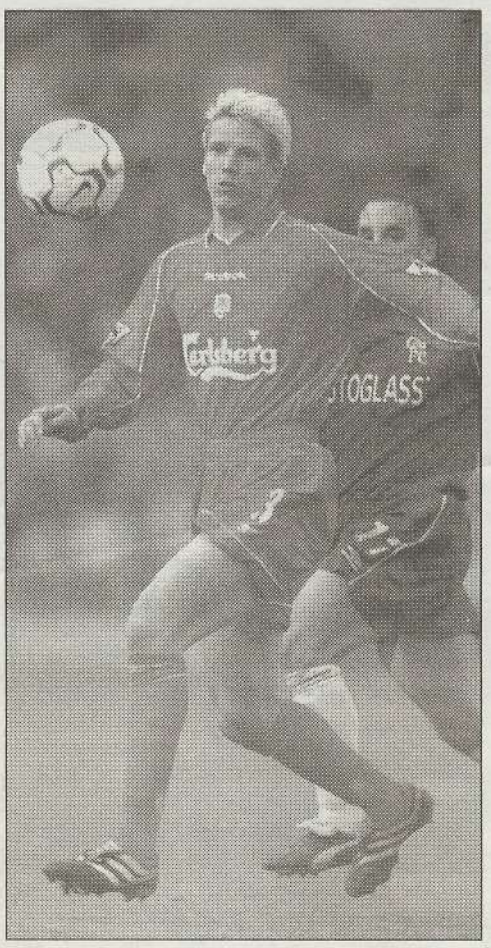
In a message posted on his website, Ziege said he could not understand why he had been left out of Saturday's match.

"I haven't quite got my head round the fact that I sat on the bench against Manchester United," the 29-year-old said.

"I played 90 minutes for Germany against Greece (on March 28) without any problems.

"Manager Houllier has confirmed to me that I am training well. What more can I do? I don't want to play in the reserves.

"I didn't come to Liverpool to improve my English. I want to play football."



Christian Ziege: Fustrated with life at Liverpool.

Bayern, Madrid tipped to win Champions League

Bayern Munich and Real Madrid are joint favourites at 11-4 to win the Champions League, according to British bookmaker William Hill.

Leeds United's 3-0 home win over Deportivo Coruna in the quarter-finals on Wednesday saw them installed as third favourites at 5-1.

Odds of 7/1 were offered on an all-English final after Arsenal's 2-1 win against Valencia at Highbury last week and Manchester United's 1-0 defeat by Bayern Munich at Old Trafford last week.

Real lost 3-2 against Galatasaray in the other Champions League quarter-final in Istanbul last week.

Other odds:
6/1 Arsenal
13/2 Valencia
8/1 Manchester United
16/1 Galatasaray
40/1 Deportivo

Inter eyes Lyon's Govou

Inter Milan are preparing a move for exciting Olympique Lyon striker Sidney Govou, the French sports daily L'Equipe said on its website.

L'Equipe said the Italian first division side were prepared to offer around 150 million French francs ($20.63 million) for the 21-year-old forward, who burst into the spotlight last month when he scored his first two goals in the Champions League and helped his team to a 3-0 victory over Bayern Munich.

There have been contacts between the player's agents and the Italian club, the website said.

Govou, who is contracted to play for Lyon for the next three years, and has been negotiating a two-year extension, acknowledged negotiations were taking place, but sought to play them down.

"For the moment nothing's been done. I am negotiating with Lyon for the coming years. I feel at home at Olympique Lyon," he was quoted as saying.

"For the moment, I'm hearing rumours of a transfer. I have taken note, I am flattered, but I have other things to think about. I am still not even a permanent fixture in Lyon's starting line-up. I still have a lot to prove," he added.

Wenger bemoans slim win over Valencia

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was left frustrated by his team's 2-1 victory over Valencia in the first leg of their Champions League quarter-final at Highbury last week.

Although second-half goals from Thierry Henry and Ray Parlour gave the English side a deserved victory after they had trailed at the interval, Wenger thought his side should be taking a more decisive advantage into the return match in Spain.

"The players gave a fantastic reaction in the second half, full of character and determination," he said, "but I have regrets, because I felt that a third and fourth goal were possible with the situation in the match."

Wenger said he had gambled by introducing French striker Sylvain Wiltord as a half-time substitute for midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg with his team 1-0 down to Fabian Ayala's opportunist goal just before the interval.

"Valencia are a very defensive team and I thought we needed to put them under more pressure," he said.

"Fortunately the players realised this as well and we had more determination and belief in the second half which was characterised by Ray Parlour's goal."

Although Parlour's unstoppable 25-yard right-foot shot settled the tie in Arsenal's favour on the hour, Wenger said French midfielder Patrick Vieira had inspired his team's fightback.

"He was phenomenal," Wenger said. "He has done it many times before but you could see that he was not prepared to lose the match without increasing his efforts and this rubbed off on the other players as we started to win more one on one battles around the pitch."

Vieira missed a good chance to put Arsenal ahead in the early stages, heading a corner onto the crossbar from two yards, but Wenger said there were other chances to increase the victory margin.

Wenger said there was no doubt how Arsenal would approach the second leg in Valencia on April 17, with Ayala's away goal leaving the tie finely-balanced..

"The position is well poised but we have to be positive, to attack and to try to score goals because Valencia will punish us if we try to defend," he said.

Figo blames Gala loss on concentration lapse

Real Madrid forward Luis Figo admitted his side lost their concentration as they suffered a "disastrous" second half against Galatasaray in their Champions League quarter-final first leg last week.

Real were in control of the game at the halfway point as goals from Ivan Helguera and Claude Makelele gave them a comfortable lead.

An Umit Davala penalty a couple of minutes after the break sparked a superb Galatasaray comeback, as the UEFA Cup holders went on to win the game 3-2 with further goals from Hasan Sas and Mario Jardel.

The Spanish sports press described the defeat variously as a nightmare, an unacceptable display and a case of Real throwing the game away.

"The first half was excellent but the second was a disaster," Figo said . "We were well on our way at the half-time mark but football is always unpredictable.

"We lost concentration and we needed a better attitude. We also defended too far back."

Figo believes Real are still in with a good chance of making it through to a semifinal clash with either Bayern Munich or Manchester United.

"The tie is still wide open even though we'll have to suffer in the second leg in Madrid," he said.

Real coach Vicente del Bosque revealed that he had warned his players at halftime not to take victory for granted.

"We knew that the tie wasn't resolved at the break," del Bosque said.

"We were aware that we couldn't afford to let our concentration slip but we lost control and they came back.

INJURY ENDS LITMANEN'S SEASON

Finnish international Jari Litmanen is unlikely to play again this season after breaking his wrist, Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier said last week.

The striker was hurt during Finland's 2-1 World Cup qualifier defeat by England on March 24.

"It's a bad injury. He broke the bone in the wrist into eight pieces," Houllier said.

"It will take him at least three weeks before he can start training and six weeks before he starts playing.

"It is difficult to see him playing again before the end of the season.

Litmanen joined Liverpool on a free transfer from Barcelona earlier this year.

Jari Litmanen

EFFENBERG PLANS TO LEAVE GERMANY

Bayern Munich captain Stefan Effenberg has said he plans to leave Germany for another country. "I will definitely leave Germany with my family," the 32-year-old playmaker told weekly Bunte in an interview.

"It could be in a year, when my contract with Bayern ends," he added.

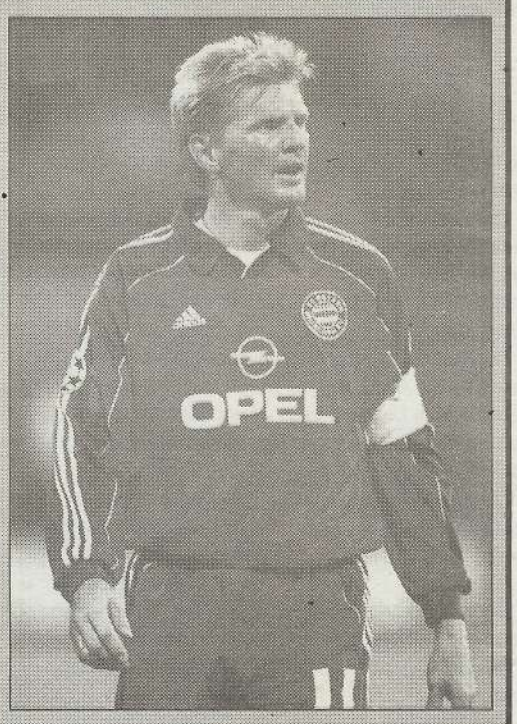
Effenberg, who played a key role in Bayern's 1-0 Champions League quarter-final victory at Manchester United last week, had already said he wanted to leave Bayern when his contract expires in 2002.

The former German international has not made it clear whether he would then pursue his career but he told Bunte that if he were to sign for a new club, he would like to play in London.

"The city is just great," he said. "I could play for any of their three clubs."

Which two of the five English premier league sides in the English capital — Arsenal, Charlton Athletic, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham United — he would not consider playing for was not revealed.

When his playing days are over, Effenberg said he wanted to go to live in Florida, where he is building a house.



Stefan Effenberg: Relishing the prospects of playing outside Germany.

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

Giovanni Trapattoni, Alessandro Del Piero, Filippo Inzaghi and Francesco Totti will be the names that Italy pins their hopes on for the 2002 World Cup.

They are the frontline. Behind them are Paolo Maldini, Alessandro Nesta and Christian Vieri.

Of course this is not their positional lineup but rather the names of players and a coach that carry a nation's hopes next year.

Trapattoni, as stated numerous times in this column, is the ideal man to lead Italy. His club record is second to none, he has charisma and, most importantly, he has great knowledge of the game. There is only one Trapattoni and Italy are lucky to have him on their bench.

Some critics still say that he is linked to 'catenaccio' - the old and very defensive system used in Italy in the past. Really? Inzaghi and Del Piero and Totti in just behind them, hardly makes for a defensive team. Add Vincenzo Montella on the bench and Vieri who is also available, then the picture becomes clearer of the 'new' Italy under the 'Trap'.

Del Piero is making many eat humble pie including this columnist who had written him off at international level. His excellent club form (scoring goals especially late in games) has been translated into excellent national team form.

As his teammate Nesta said: "Del Piero is back".

Inzaghi just can't stop scoring goals for Italy. After a stint on the Juventus bench this year, the very talented and mercurial finisher is an irreplaceable part of Italy's attacking strength.

Inzaghi and Del Piero are an awesome combination and even Vieri will have to wait his time before getting into the starting 11. Despite a hat-trick of goals in a club game for Inter just over a week ago and other recent good form, Vieri is, at this stage, just behind the other two in the running for a place in the team.

Montella, the Roma striker who is regularly hitting the back of the net, is also pushing for a place in the national team. In Italy's recent 4-0 win over Lithuania in Trieste he came off the bench in the second half.

Totti is without doubt the best Italian player around. In behind the frontline or even as part of it, he is dynamic. Italy will be hoping Totti plays as well in the World Cup as he did in Euro 2000.

In defence, Maldini, Nesta and Fabio Cannavaro run a very tight ship. Nesta, Cannavaro and Maldini are still the envy of most national teams and are genuinely a brilliant combination.

They are so solid at the back it reminds me of the 1982 winning World Cup team which had the Juventus trio, Claudio Gentile, Antonio Cabrini and the late Gaetano Scirea, as the backbone of the defence.

With the good results achieved in the qualifying rounds, the plane tickets for Italian team to Korea and Japan have already been bought.

How funny was it to see Massimo Taibi score a goal last week? Taibi is the Reggina goalkeeper who in the 88th minute scored a goal by heading in for his team against Udinese.

Taibi is currently the captain of Reggina but he is a name that the Old Trafford faithful surely haven't forgotten. Signed nearly two years ago to replace Peter Schmeichel, he soon found himself out of his depth at Manchester.

The Venetian goalie was laughable at times between the sticks. Sir Alex Ferguson wasn't laughing and neither were the Man Utd supporters - Taibi soon found himself back in Italy all packaged up and marked 'return to sender - damaged goods'.

Landing on his feet again, he ended up with struggling Southern Italian side Reggina. Here at Reggina he has proved himself to an adequate 'keeper but last week, with his side down 0-1, he joined the attack for a corner.

His crisp header would have done a regular striker proud and Taibi became the first 'keeper to score a goal in the Serie A since Michelangelo Rampulla (a replacement goalie) scored for Juventus in the early 90's.

Now there was the reason Man Utd signed him in the first place - to partner Andy Cole up front and he should never have played out of position as a 'keeper!

ITALIAN SERIE A

BOLOGNA 3 PERUGIA 2

Bologna came from behind twice to record their 10th win of the season. Perugia's Giovanni Tedesco put the visitors in the lead with a fine chip in the sixth minute but Tomas Locatelli equalised a minute later with a strike from just outside the box.

Tedesco bagged his second with an 18th minute header but youngster Giacomo Cipriani equalised on the stroke of halftime with a brilliant overhead kick inside the box.

Ex-Perugia midfielder Renato Olive gave Bologna the win, knocking home a rebound in the 77th minute.

NAPOLI 0 AC MILAN 0

Ten-man Napoli held AC Milan to a goalless draw in front of 40,000 at the San Paolo stadium. AC Milan had several opportunities to take the lead but Napoli goalkeeper Alberto Fontana made some critical saves on Jose Mari and Francesco Cocò.

Defender Salvatore Fresi was sent off three minutes before halftime for a last-man foul on Milan forward Andriy Shevchenko but Napoli held on for their ninth league draw of the season.

Parma's Patrick Mboma (left), tries to control the ball during the match between Lazio and Parma which was later suspended because the turf was flooded.

BRESCIA 4 REGGINA 0

Brescia earned their fifth league win of the season by thrashing Reggina in a relegation clash.

Roberto Baggio converted a penalty and set up two other goals to help Brescia climb to 25 points, one above Napoli, Verona, and Vicenza.

Reggina remain second from bottom with 20 points.

LECCE 0 ATALANTA 2

In-form Atalanta grabbed their sixth road win of the season.

Nicola Ventola put the visitors in the lead with his seventh goal of the season in the 69th minute.

Midfielder Domenico Morfeo made sure of the victory by adding a breakaway goal 10 minutes from time. Atalanta climb to fifth, level on 40 points with Parma who have a game in hand.

UDINESE 2 BARI 0

Udinese notched their 10th victory of the season and first under new manager Luciano Spalletti by beating bottom club Bari.

Italy international Stefano Fiore put the home side in front after 50 seconds of play slotting home a cross from Martin Jorgensen. Striker Roberto Muzzi, making his return from injury after a three month absence, secured the win when he scored well into injury time for his fifth goal of the season.

VERONA 0 JUVENTUS 1

Alessandro Del Piero converted a 45th minute penalty to give Juventus their seventh away win and 15th league victory of the season. Juventus remain second, six points behind top-of-the-table AS Roma who play at Fiorentina on Monday.

Verona were left with 10 men after defender Luigi Apolloni was sent off in the 68th minute.

Match Postponed:

Lazio v Parma

(rescheduled Wednesday, April 18)

Udinese's Valerio Bertotto (right), and Bari's Phil Masinga jump for the ball.

Brescia	4	Reggina	0
Inter Milan	1	Vicenza	1
Lecce	0	Atalanta	2
Napoli	0	AC Milan	0
Udinese	2	Bari	0
Verona	0	Juventus	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. AS Roma	24	18	4	2	47	18	58
2. Juventus	25	15	7	3	42	20	52
3. Lazio	24	14	4	6	44	27	46
4. Parma	24	11	7	6	38	21	40
5. Atalanta	25	10	10	5	31	20	40
6. Inter Milan	25	10	8	7	33	29	38
7. AC Milan	25	9	10	6	38	35	37
8. Bologna	25	10	6	9	32	31	36
9. Udinese	25	10	2	13	39	41	32
10. Perugia	25	8	7	10	32	36	31
11. Fiorentina	24	6	12	6	38	34	30
12. Lecce	25	7	8	10	31	40	29
13. Brescia	25	5	10	10	30	36	25
14. Vicenza	25	6	7	12	24	36	25
15. Verona	25	6	6	13	29	45	24
16. Napoli	25	5	9	11	24	36	24
17. Reggina	25	5	5	15	18	41	20
18. Bari	25	5	4	16	21	45	19

WORLD

ENGLISH FA CUP

SEMI-FINALS

LIVERPOOL 2 WYCOMBE 1

Late goals by Emile Heskey and Robbie Fowler have helped Liverpool overcome plucky second division Wycombe Wanderers 2-1 in their FA Cup semi-final.

Liverpool will face Arsenal in the final on May 12 at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff after they beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 in the other semi-final.

Wycombe, bidding to become the first third tier side to reach an FA Cup final, finally cracked after 78 minutes when Heskey headed home a Steven Gerrard cross.

Fowler curled in a fine free kick five minutes later to make it 2-0 before Wycombe captain Keith Ryan gave Liverpool a nervy finale with a lobbed goal two minutes from time.

ARSENAL 1 TOTTENHAM 2

Arsenal reached the FA Cup final on Sunday after Robert Pires's 73rd-minute goal gave them a 2-1 semifinal victory over north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur.

Pires sidefooted home a Sylvain Wiltord cross to give Arsene Wenger's side a deserved victory at Old Trafford over Spurs, who were playing their first match under new manager Glenn Hoddle.

Spurs took the lead though Gary Doherty after 13 minutes but Patrick Vieira equalised for Arsenal 20 minutes later.

FINAL

ARSENAL Vs LIVERPOOL

Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on May 12

Liverpool's Robbie Fowler (right) goes past Wycombe Wanderer's Michael Simpson during the FA Cup Semi-Final game at Villa Park, Birmingham.

ENGLISH PREMERSHIP

EVERTON 3 MAN. CITY 1

Jeff Whitley headed City after nine minutes but Duncan Ferguon sidefooted an equaliser for Everton seven minutes later.

City 'keeper Nicky Weaver then tripped Kevin Campbell and though he saved Michael Ball's first attempt from the penalty spot, he couldn't prevent the Everton midfielder converting the rebound five minutes before halftime.

Slack defending allowed David Weir to head Everton's third after 84 minutes, while Paul Dickov of City and Everton's Alessandro Pistone were sent off in the final minutes.

ASTON VILLA 2 WEST HAM 2

After five successive defeats Frederic Kanoute gave West Ham some cheer with a fierce 46th-minute effort from a pass by Frank Lampard.

Frenchman David Ginola drove in a fine 71st-minute freekick to level the score and Lee Hendrie's close range effort made it 2-1 to Villa. But West Ham averted a fifth league defeat in a row when Igor Stimac headed against a post and Lampard converted the rebound with three minutes remaining.

DERBY COUNTY 0 CHELSEA 4

Chelsea were the better side at Pride Park but had to wait until the 64th minute to make the breakthrough, Gianfranco Zola stroking the ball home after a run and cross by Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink.

Hasselbaink netted his 20th of the season after 85 minutes and two goals by Uruguayan Gustavo Poyet in the last couple of minutes wrapped up Chelsea's second win away from home of the season. Chelsea moved up to sixth.

LEEDS UNITED 2 SOUTHAMPTON 0

Harry Kewell's 25-metre piledriver — his first goal for a year — gave David O'Leary's side the lead after 10 minutes.

Robbie Keane's delightful lob double Leeds's advantage 18 minutes from time. Dean Richards' had an effort ruled out for offside but Southampton failed to avert their second successive defeat since manager Glenn Hoddle left the club.

LEICESTER CITY 1 COVENTRY CITY 3

Resurgent Coventry gained the perfect start when Craig Bellamy's first-time shot put them ahead after only 62 seconds at Filbert Street. Ade Akinbiyi equalised for Leicester eight minutes later.

Lee Carsley headed Coventry back in front in the 19th minute and they deservedly sealed the points when John Hartson headed his fifth goal in four games six minutes into the second half. Gordon Strachan's side are only a point behind fourth from bottom Middlesbrough, who face Sunderland on Monday.

Manchester City's Paulo Wanchope (right) rides a challenge from Everton's David Wier of Everton during their game at Goodison Park, Liverpool, over the weekend.

Everton	3	Manchester City	1
Aston Villa	2	West Ham United	2
Derby County	0	Chelsea	4
Leeds United	2	Southampton	0
Leicester City	1	Coventry City	3

	P	W	L	D	F	A	PTS
1. Manchester United	31	21	7	3	68	21	70
2. Arsenal	31	16	9	6	49	29	57
3. Leeds United	32	15	8	9	48	38	53
4. Ipswich Town	31	16	4	11	47	36	52
5. Liverpool	29	14	7	8	50	31	49
6. Chelsea	31	13	9	9	58	38	48
7. Sunderland	31	13	9	9	37	32	48
8. Aston Villa	32	11	12	9	38	34	45
9. Charlton Athletic	31	12	9	10	41	42	45
10. Leicester City	32	13	6	13	33	38	45
11. Southampton	31	12	8	11	34	39	44
12. Tottenham Hotspur	31	10	9	12	36	40	39
13. Newcastle United	30	11	6	13	36	43	39
14. Everton	32	10	8	14	36	45	38
15. West Ham United	32	8	12	12	37	42	36
16. Derby County	32	8	11	13	31	51	35
17. Middlesbrough	31	6	13	12	34	38	31
18. Coventry City	32	7	9	16	31	52	30
19. Manchester City	32	6	9	17	35	55	27
20. Bradford City	30	3	9	18	22	57	18

WORLD

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until April 11)

1	Brazil	814	70	Burkina Faso	494	139	St Kitts & Nevis	277
2	France	797	71	Macedonia FYR	492	140	St Lucia	275
3	Argentina	771	72=	Congo DR	488	141	Korea DPR	267
4	Portugal	738	72=	Uzbekistan	488	142	Luxemburg	265
5	Italy	735	74	Bosnia-Her	487	143	Bangladesh	262
6	Czech Republic	734	75=	Albania	476	144	Tanzania	260
7	Spain	727	75=	**AUSTRALIA**	476	145	Ant and Barbuda	248
8	Paraguay	703	77	China PR	475	146	Andorra	245
9	Netherlands	702	78	Liberia	474	147	Benin	243
10	Yugoslavia	701	79	Guinea	473	148	Grenada	242
11	Germany	698	80	Cuba	471	149	Liechtenstein	240
12	Mexico	684	81	Algeria	470	150	Botswana	232
13	Romania	680	82	Iraq	469	151	Sri Lanka	226
14	Norway	670	83	Togo	468	152	Dominican Rep	
15	Colombia	667	84	Senegal	461	153	Dominica	220
16	England	659	85	El Salvador	459	154	Bermuda	217
17	Croatia	656	85	Qatar	459	155	Maldives	216
18	United States	655	87	Namibia	458	156	Gambia	214
19	Russia	639	88	Haiti	456	157	Cape Verde Is	209
20	South Africa	631	89	Lithuania	453	158	Eritrea	196
21	Sweden	629	90	Congo	451	159	Palestine	194
22	Chile	623	91	Latvia	449	160	Cayman Islands	193
23	Slovakia	620	92	New Zealand	446	161=	Kyrgyzstan	188
24	Denmark	619	93	Armenia	440	161=	Yemen	188
25	Saudi Arabia	617	94	Gabon	438	163	Mauritania	187
26	Belgium	615	95	Vietnam SR	437	164	Chinese Taipei	185
27	Tunisia	612	96	Northern Ireland	433	165=	Chad	173
28	Scotland	606	97	Moldova	426	166	Surinam	172
29	Turkey	605	98	Indonesia	425	167	Laos	170
30	Morocco	602	99	Belarus	423	168	San Marino	167
31	Trin & Tobago	597	100	Mali	420	169	British Virgin Is.	166
32	Poland	595	101	Oman	413	170	Nepal	165
33	Egypt	594	102=	Singapore	411	171	Vanuatu	163
33	Uruguay	594	102=	Syria	411	172	Cambodia	157
35	Ireland Republic	590	104	Uganda	408	173	Cook Islands	156
36	Cameroon	587	105	Jordan	407	174	Samoa	139
37	Iran	586	106	Kenya	406	175	Netherlands Ant	133
38	Ukraine	584	107	Barbados	404	176	Cent African Rep.	127
39	Korea Republic	582	108	Malaysia	400	177	Guinea-Bissau	125
40	Slovenia	581	109	Wales	383	178	Bahamas	116
41	Israel	576	110	Lebanon	382	179=	Macao	115
42	Japan	575	111	Venezuela	375	179=	Philippines	115
43	Jamaica	570	112	Madagascar		179=	Sao Tome e Principe	115
44	Greece	568	113	Malawi	362	182	Niger	106
45	Austria	567	114	Bahrain	360	183	Guyana	104
46	Cote d' Ivoire	564	115=	Libya	359	184	Aruba	100
47	Hungary	560	115=	Mozambique	340	185	Tonga	98
48	Peru	555	117	Azerbaijan	346	186	Belize	92
49	Bulgaria	553	118	Mauritius	342	187	Equatorial Guinea	90
49	Honduras	553	119	Faroe Islands	332	188	Mongolia	89
51	Zambia	552	120	Sudan	327	189	Seychelles	83
52	Nigeria	545	121	Malta	322	190	Djibouti	79
53	Ecuador	543	122	Kazakhstan	321	191	Pakistan	72
54=	Angola	541	123	Panama	316	192	Nicaragua	71
54=	Iceland	541	124	India	312	193	PNG	65
56	Costa Rica	539	125	Hong Kong	308	194	Darussalam	64
57	Finland	535	126	Myanmar	306	195	Puerto Rico	63
58	Guatemala	529	127	Burundi	305	196	Somalia	59
59	Ghana	526	128	Swaziland	304	197	Anguilla	58
60	Switzerland	525	129	Turkmenistan	303	198	US Virgin Islands	33
61	Thailand	521	130	St Vincent/Gr	300	199	Guam	29
62	Cyprus	516	131	Rwanda	298	200	Turks and Caicos Islands	22
63	Canada	511	132	Lesotho	290	201	Bhutan	15
64	UAE	507	133	Fiji	289	202	Montserrat	11
65	Zimbabwe	506	134=	Sierra Leone	288	203	American Samoa	8
66=	Bolivia	503	134=	Solomon Is.	288			
66=	Georgia	503	136	Tahiti	286			
66=	Kuwait	503	137	Ethiopia	280			
69	Estonia	502	138	Tajikistan	279			

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*

UEFA CUP Semi-Finals

BARCELONA	**0**
LIVERPOOL	**0**

Liverpool employed a policy of safety at all costs to frustrate Barcelona and earn a goalless draw in a UEFA Cup semi-final first leg that flickered into life only briefly at the end.

But Gerard Houllier's side will go back to Anfield confident of reaching the final — almost certainly against Spanish club Alaves who beat German side Kaiserslautern in the first leg of the other semi-final. Liverpool gave a highly disciplined, if drab, display.

Barcelona created just a handful of half-chances in the opening 45 minutes, notably a snap-shot from Luis Enrique and a chest down and shot from the tightly-marked Rivaldo.

Liverpool were wearing the white shirts of their new away kit, just as the 1976 team had when they won 1-0 here on their way to victory in the same competition.

Rarely can Barcelona have had so much possession in a game and rarely can they have found so little to do with it.

Hyypia said afterwards: "This was a good result for us away from home, I think we can win it back at Anfield."

Liverpool held firm though, and the only time in the first half Sander Westerveld's goal came under threat was from a Guardiola freekick that Babbel had to head clear at the far post.

Rivaldo then brought some applause from the 90,000 crowd as he controlled a Guardiola cross on his chest, turned inside past Henchoz and sent a skimming shot wide.

The second half saw Liverpool defend a little further forward and as a result both sides had half-chances towards the end.

Westerveld had to save just twice, though, from Kluivert's cross-shot on the left after a swift break away from Barca and Cocu's sweet strike from the edge of the box.

In the dying seconds Rivaldo chipped a shot into the net but the flag had already gone up for offside.

Barcelona winger, Boudjewin Zenden (left) fights for the ball with Liverpool midfielder Markus Babbel.

ALAVES	**5**
KAISERSLAUTERN	**1**

Alaves virtually guaranteed themselves a place in the UEFA Cup final in their first season in European competition as they stormed to an historic 5-1 victory over Kaiserslautern in the first leg of their semi-final last week.

In an astonishing match of four penalties, Alaves scored three goals from the spot and Kaiserslautern one.

After an initial period of hectic pressure from the home side Romanian international Cosmin Contra made the most of some harsh refereeing to expertly convert penalties in the 20th and 31st minutes and put his side 2-0 ahead.

To the delight of the home fans Jordi Cruyff then stabbed home two minutes from the break to give the humble Basque side a 3-0 halftime lead.

They were given even more to celebrate 11 minutes into the second half as the lively Cruyff was brought down once more in the area and Uruguyan forward Ivan Alonso stepped up to make it 4-0.

The Germans were thrown a lifeline for the second leg when Harry Koch slotted home from the spot after referee Rene Pedersen awarded yet another penalty in the 66th minute.

But Magno Mocelin all but extinguished the German side's faint hopes as he sent a superb angled shot into the far corner on 81 minutes to make it 5-1 and virtually render the second leg in Germany in two weeks time meaningless.

Alaves striker, Jordi Cryuff (right) challenges Kaiserslautern defender Frederic Webber.

WORLD

WORLD RESULTS ... WORLD RESULTS ...

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

EFFENBERG SEES RED

Bayern Munich striker, Giovanne Elber (left) with captain Stefan Effenberg as he left the pitch after being redcarded.

Bayern Munich managed to hold on to top spot in the Bundesliga over the weekend, despite having two players sent off in a bad-tempered 1-1 draw with Borussia Dortmund, who themselves finished the game with 10 players.

Borussia Dortmund are now just one point behind Bayern, while Bayer Leverkusen are third on goal difference after beating Eintracht Frankfurt 3-1 earlier in the day.

Roque Santa Cruz gave Bayern the best possible start after six minutes, slotting home from six metres out after a pass from French international Bixente Lizarazu.

Lizarazu was the first man to be sent off just after the half-hour mark for a second bookable offence.

But Dortmund equalised on 52 minutes when midfielder Lars Ricken got past Bayern defender Sammy Kuffour and found Fredi Bobic, whose shot went just inside the near post.

Stefan Effenberg, the inspiration behind Wednesday's victory, was given a red card for bodychecking Brazilian midfielder Dede in the 55th minute.

Dortmund's Evanilson was sent off just before fulltime for a tackle from behind on Paulo Sergio.

Bayer Leverkusen's Ulf Kirsten gave his side a 23rd minute lead in their match against Eintracht Frankfurt with his 11th goal of the season after a pinpoint pass from Paulo Rink.

Croatian international Robert Kovac was sent off for a second bookable offence in the 36th minute and Eintracht, who appointed new coach Friedel Rausch on Tuesday in a bid to stay up, equalised through Chinese international Chen Yang.

But Brazilian defender Lucio killed off Eintracht with two goals in the 67th and 82nd minutes to bring his tally to five goals in nine Bundesliga matches.

Cologne went 1-0 up after 11 minutes against league minnows SpVgg Unterhaching through German under-21 international Christian Timm.

Unterhaching's Markus Oberleitner equalised after half-time for a 1-1 draw.

Werder Bremen beat Hertha Berlin 3-1 helped by two goals from their Peruvian international Claudio Pizarro. Meanwhile, bottom club VfL Bochum were surprise winners when they beat TSV 1860 Munich 4-2, while SC Freiburg drew 0-0 with Hamburg SV.

Schalke 04 5 Kaiserslautern 1, Hansa Rostock 1 VfB Stuttgart 1, Borussia Dortmund 1 Bayern Munich 1, Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Bayer Leverkusen 3, Cologne 1 SpVgg Unterhaching 1, Werder Bremen 3 Hertha Berlin 1, SC Freiburg 0 Hamburg SV 0, TSV 1860 Munich 2 VfL Bochum 4, Energie Cottbus 0 VfL Wolfsburg 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Bayern Munich	**28**	**15**	**5**	**8**	**54**	**32**	**50**
2. Schalke 04	28	14	7	7	51	27	49
3. Bayer Leverkusen	28	15	4	9	49	34	49
4. Borussia Dortmund	28	14	7	7	49	36	49
5. Hertha Berlin	28	15	1	12	51	47	46
6. Kaiserslautern	28	14	4	10	41	42	46
7. Werder Bremen	28	12	7	9	42	41	43
8. Cologne	28	11	8	9	48	40	41
9. VfLWolfsburg	28	10	10	8	51	35	40
10. Freiburg	28	10	10	8	38	31	40
11. Hansa Rostock	28	10	5	13	29	40	35
12. Hamburg SV	28	9	7	12	50	49	34
13. 1860 Munich	28	9	7	12	35	49	34
14. VfB Stuttgart	28	6	10	12	36	44	28
15. E. Cottbus	28	9	3	16	32	44	30
16. Unterhaching	28	7	9	12	27	46	30
17. E. Frankfurt	28	8	5	15	34	55	29
18. VfL Bochum	28	7	5	16	27	52	26

SCOTTISH PREMIERSHIP

CELTIC CHAMPIONS AGAIN

Celtic have secured the Scottish league championship for the 37th time after defeating bottom club St Mirren 1-0 at Parkhead.

Tommy Johnson's 38th minute goal was enough to give the Glasgow club an unassailable lead over Rangers, with five games remaining.

Celtic – who have lost only one game in the Scottish premier league all season – have 88 points from 33 games, a 22-point lead over their Old Firm rivals.

"It's been a fantastic day," said Celtic manager Martin O'Neill.

"It's really brilliant, worth waiting for. To win it in front of our own fans is absolutely fantastic."

The disposed champions could only sit back knowing that O'Neill's team were unlikely to squander the opportunity to wrap up only their second title in 13 seasons.

The game itself was a pale affair in comparison to the scenes of celebration afterwards by the 60,440 crowd, a record for Parkhead.

Celtic players celebrating their League triumph after their win over St. Mirren.

Former Aston Villa striker Johnson, who was deputising for suspended Chris Sutton, struck seven minutes before half-time, taking a Henrik Larsson pass and squeezing a right foot shot past St Mirren goalkeeper Ludovic Roy from 10 metres.

Celtic last won the title in 1998, to prevent Rangers winning a record 10 successive championships, and will be hoping the balance of power has now finally shifted in Scottish football after 12 years in their rivals' shadows.

The turnaround from last season is certainly remarkable. Rangers won the title then with a 21-point margin and that has been reverse by O'Neill in his first season in charge at Parkhead.

Celtic are now on course for their first domestic treble since 1969, having already won the League Cup and with a Scottish Cup semifinal next Sunday against Dundee United.

Hibernian 0 Rangers 0, Aberdeen 0 Dundee 2, Celtic 1 St Mirren 0, Dundee United 1 Hearts 1, Kilmarnock 2 Dunfermline Athletic 1, Motherwell 1 St Johnstone 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Celtic	33	28	4	1	81	24	88
2. Rangers	32	21	4	7	58	30	67
3. Hibernian	33	17	10	6	52	25	61
4. Kilmarnock	32	14	7	11	38	42	49
5. Hearts	33	13	8	12	52	44	47
6. Dundee	33	11	8	14	47	41	41
7. Dunfermline	33	11	8	14	32	48	41
8. Motherwell	33	11	6	16	37	48	39
9. Aberdeen	33	8	12	13	37	48	36
10. St Johnstone	33	8	11	14	35	48	35
11. Dundee Utd	33	5	8	20	30	58	23
12. St Mirren	33	5	4	24	21	64	19

PRIMERA LIGA

BARCA COMEBACK NOT ENOUGH

Barcelona's hopes of mounting a challenge for the title suffered another setback, despite an extraordinary rally against Villarreal.

The Catalans were 3-0 down after 20 minutes before coming back to clinch a pulsating 4-4 draw with a Patrick Kluivert hat-trick and a brilliant finish from Rivaldo.

Barcelona made an appalling start against Villarreal, as Victor struck twice either side of Javier Calleja's flashing left-foot drive to make it 3-0 after 20 minutes.

Llorenc Serra Ferrer's side got one back through Kluivert after 38 minutes and there was still time before the break for Luis Enrique to have a goal ruled out for offside and for Rivaldo to miss a penalty.

Kluivert grabbed his second on 54 minutes and Rivaldo chested down a Pep Guardiola through ball to level the scores just after the hour mark.

Barca would have had high hopes of clinching victory at that stage but a mistake from Guardiola allowed Jorge Lopez in for what looked like a winner on 66 minutes.

Kluivert, Rivaldo and Simao Sabrosa all missed clear chances before the Dutch international clinched his hat-trick two minutes into injury-time, taking a long pass from Guardiola and Real Madrid took a major step towards the Spanish league title with a 1-0 win at Las Palmas.

Real were below strength and below their best at Las Palmas but clinched the points as Guti converted a Luis Figo cross at the second attempt after 58 minutes.

Real's closest challengers Deportivo fell behind to Zaragoza via a Paulo Jamelli strike late in the first half and five minutes after the break Djalminha was sent off to further dent their hopes.

Juan Eduardo Esnaider made it 2-0 to Zaragoza on 82 minutes before a late reply from Nourredine Naybet.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the table, Real Sociedad moved out of the relegation zone with a 3-0 win at home to Real Oviedo.

Valencia striker, John Carew (right) contests the ball with a Vallecano player.

Alaves 4 Valladolid 2, Celta Vigo 2 Athletic Bilbao 1, Espanyol 1 Malaga 2, Las Palmas 0 Real Madrid 1, Numancia 0 Real Mallorca 2, Osasuna 1 Racing Santander 1, Real Sociedad 3 Real Oviedo 0, Real Zaragoza 2 Deportivo La Coruna 1, Villarreal 4 Barcelona 4, Rayo Vallecano 1 Valencia 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Real Madrid	29	19	5	5	62	30	62
2. Deportivo La Coruna	29	16	6	7	57	35	54
3. Valencia	29	15	7	7	47	23	52
4. Barcelona	29	14	8	7	63	43	50
5. Real Mallorca	29	13	10	6	40	34	49
6. Celta Vigo	29	12	8	9	41	40	44
7. Alaves	29	12	7	10	46	39	43
8. Villarreal	29	12	7	10	44	40	43
9. Malaga	29	12	5	12	47	47	41
10. Espanyol	29	11	6	12	36	32	39
11. Rayo Vallecano	29	9	10	10	49	51	37
12. Athletic Bilbao	29	9	9	11	37	42	36
13. Real Zaragoza	29	8	11	10	41	42	35
14. Las Palmas	29	10	5	14	29	48	35
15. Valladolid	29	7	11	11	33	39	32
16. Real Oviedo	29	9	5	15	38	54	32
17. Real Sociedad	29	7	8	14	33	56	29
18. Osasuna	29	6	10	13	32	44	28
19. Racing Santander	29	7	6	16	35	49	27
20. Numancia	29	7	6	16	27	49	27

WORLD LEAGUES

FRENCH CHAMPIONNAT

Olympique Lyon 2 Monaco 1, Metz 1 Nantes 2, Sedan 2 En Avant Guingamp 2, Stade Rennes 2 Olympique Marseille 0, Troyes 0 St Etienne 0, Paris St Germain 3 AJ Auxerre 0, Strasbourg 1 Toulouse 0, Bastia 1 RC Lens 3, Lille 2 Bordeaux 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Nantes	**30**	**17**	**5**	**8**	**51**	**35**	**56**
2. Lille	30	15	9	6	37	21	54
3. O. Lyon	30	13	13	4	44	26	52
4. Bordeaux	30	13	11	6	42	27	50
5. Sedan	30	13	9	8	41	33	48
6. Rennes	30	13	6	11	41	31	45
7. Troyes	30	11	10	9	42	43	43
8. En Avant	30	11	9	10	36	40	42
9. AJ Auxerre	30	11	7	12	30	37	40
10. PSG	30	11	6	13	39	39	39
11. Bastia	30	11	6	13	37	37	39
12. Monaco	30	11	5	14	46	45	38
13. RC Lens	30	9	10	11	34	33	37
14. O. Marseille	30	9	6	15	26	36	33
15. Metz	29	7	10	12	29	41	31
16. St Etienne	30	9	8	13	37	47	28
17. Strasbourg	29	6	8	15	25	51	26
18. Toulouse	30	5	10	15	26	42	25

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

Sparta Rotterdam 0 Fortuna Sittard 2, Groningen 1 Roda JC Kerkrade 3, NAC Breda 1 Feyenoord 0, Ajax Amsterdam 0 PSV Eindhoven 1, Graafschap Doetinchem 2 RBC Roosendaal 2, Heerenveen 5 NEC Nijmegen 0, Twente Enschede 1 RKC Waalwijk 1, Vitesse Arnhem 1 Willem II Tilburg 2, Utrecht 1 AZ Alkmaar 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. PSV Eindhoven	**27**	**20**	**6**	**1**	**57**	**16**	**66**
2. Feyenoord	27	18	2	7	54	26	56
3. Ajax	27	15	5	7	69	32	50
4. Roda JC	27	14	6	7	49	32	48
5. Waalwijk	27	13	9	5	37	23	48
6. Vitesse Arnhem	27	13	7	7	46	38	46
7. Utrecht	26	12	5	9	42	39	41
8. Willem II	27	11	8	8	48	39	41
9. Heerenveen	26	9	10	7	37	31	37
10. NEC Nijmegen	27	8	13	6	33	35	37
11. NAC Breda	27	10	7	10	33	37	37
12. T. Enschede	27	7	9	11	38	51	30
13. Groningen	27	7	7	13	31	41	28
14. AZ Alkmaar	27	7	6	14	35	52	27
15. Graafschap	27	6	3	18	32	57	21
16. Fortuna Sittard	27	5	6	16	20	49	21
17. S. Rotterdam	27	5	5	17	35	59	20
18. Roosendaal	27	4	2	21	33	73	14

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Germinal Beerschot 2 Beveren 0, Standard Liege 0 Antwerp 1, Lokeren 0 Anderlecht 0, Excelsior Mouscron 1 Lierse 2, Ghent 2 Genk 1, Mechelen 1 Sint-Truiden 2, Club Bruges 2 Westerlo 2, Eendracht Aalst 0 Harelbeke 0, La Louviere 1 Charleroi 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	**28**	**20**	**7**	**1**	**73**	**24**	**67**
2. Club Bruges	28	18	9	1	71	23	63
3. Standard Liege	28	14	9	5	64	34	51
4. Ghent	28	14	7	7	50	39	49
5. G. Beerschot	28	15	3	10	51	38	48
6. Mouscron	28	13	6	9	55	39	45
7. Lokeren	28	12	8	8	40	34	44
8. Westerlo	28	12	7	9	50	44	43
9. Lierse	28	12	6	10	39	33	42
10. Charleroi	28	11	5	12	43	50	38
11. Antwerp	28	10	4	14	32	39	34
12. Genk	28	9	7	12	34	39	34
13. Beveren	28	8	7	13	24	52	31
14. Aalst	28	6	7	15	27	56	25
15. La Louviere	28	4	10	14	24	47	22
16. Harelbeke	28	6	3	19	30	70	21
17. Sint-Truiden	28	5	6	17	27	47	21
18. Mechelen	28	4	7	17	35	61	19

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League

	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	**26**	**18**	**5**	**3**	**53**	**19**	**59**	**13**	**10**	**2**	**0**	**32**	**7**	**13**	**7**	**3**	**3**	**21**	**12**
PERTH GLORY	**26**	**15**	**7**	**4**	**65**	**31**	**52**	**13**	**10**	**2**	**1**	**38**	**9**	**13**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**27**	**22**
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	**26**	**15**	**7**	**4**	**65**	**35**	**52**	**14**	**9**	**3**	**2**	**40**	**19**	**12**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**25**	**15**
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	**26**	**16**	**4**	**6**	**49**	**30**	**52**	**12**	**9**	**2**	**1**	**25**	**10**	**13**	**7**	**2**	**5**	**24**	**20**
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	**26**	**12**	**6**	**8**	**52**	**41**	**42**	**13**	**6**	**4**	**3**	**25**	**17**	**13**	**6**	**2**	**5**	**27**	**24**
MARCONI STALLIONS	**26**	**11**	**7**	**7**	**36**	**32**	**40**	**14**	**7**	**3**	**4**	**24**	**19**	**12**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**12**	**12**
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	26	11	6	9	44	45	39	13	5	3	4	27	26	13	6	2	5	17	19
FOOTBALL KINGZ	26	10	7	9	42	39	37	12	6	3	3	20	14	14	4	4	6	20	25
SYDNEY UNITED	26	10	6	10	38	47	36	12	6	4	2	18	17	14	4	2	8	20	33
PARRAMATTA POWER	26	10	2	14	37	44	32	13	5	1	7	21	24	13	5	1	7	16	20
CANBERRA COSMOS	26	9	4	13	43	42	31	13	5	2	6	26	18	13	4	2	7	18	23
NORTHERN SPIRIT	26	8	7	11	35	37	31	13	4	3	6	15	16	13	4	4	5	20	22
BRISBANE STRIKERS	26	8	7	11	45	48	31	13	7	4	2	31	19	13	1	3	9	13	29
NEWCASTLE UNITED	26	6	8	12	28	47	26	14	5	2	7	13	20	12	1	6	5	15	24
EASTERN PRIDE	26	5	5	16	38	43	0*	13	3	5	4	17	18	14	2	0	12	15	29

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points
*All points deducted due to breach of NSL Regulations — subject to appeal

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
(Vlahos 7, Boutsianis 43, Kalogeracos 50)
SYDNEY UNITED 1
(Menapi 26)

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. **Crowd:** 5,025. **Referee:** J. Connelly.
Caution: Talevski (SU) 42, Genc (SU) 74.

Teams: SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Isosifidis (Clarkson 72), Durakovic, Panopoulos, Boutsianis, Vlahos, Kalogeracos (Anastasiadis 66), Lozanovski (Coveny 72), Susa, Kisnorbo, Colosimo.
SYDNEY UNITED: Hughes, Olic, Burt (Bosnar 78), Plesa, Arrarte, Pondeljak, Deuk, Genc, Menapi, Talevski (Jedinar 90), Webb (Rastall 66).

PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(Roodenburg 31)
FOOTBALL KINGZ 3
(Ibrahim 14 & 79, Bluhm 93)

Venue: Parramatta Stadium. **Crowd:** 1,544. **Referee:** G. Connolly.

Teams: PARRAMATTA POWER: Reddy, Barrett, Elrich, Tobin, Miller, Berry, Brown (Eagleton 67), Thompson, Santalab, Vrkic (Orlic 84), Roodenburg (Clark 75).
FOOTBALL KINGZ: Cuello, Line, Perry, Jackson (Bunce 57), Rufer, Davis, Ibrahim, Ngata (Osman 75), Cartwright (Bluhm 78), Douglas, Burton.

LEADING GOALSCORERS
After Round Twenty-six

B. DESPOTOVSKI	(Perth Glory)	16
D. MORI	(Perth Glory)	16
S. PETROVSKI	(W'gong Wolves)	15
B. BURGESS	(Northern Spirit)	14
A. THOMPSON	(Marconi/Carlton)	12
S. CHIPPERFIELD	(W'gong Wolves)	12

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 3
(Petrovski 38, Stanton 47, Horsley 76)
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
(Cardozo 67)

Venue: WIN Stadium. **Crowd:** 7,988. **Referee:** E. Lennie.

Teams: WOLLONGONG WOLVES: Anastasiadis, Souris, Ceccoli, Stanton (Nicholson 76), Horsley, Reid, Petrovski (Harries 80), Young, Huxley, Blake, Middleby.
SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Jevdjevic, Sinovic, Kohler(Carle 45), Baillie, Juric, Halpin, Collina (Zorbas 77), Packer, Owens, MacAllister (Parisi 56), Cardozo.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
(Da Costa 21)
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 1
(Pentalis 30)

Venue: Knights Stadium. **Crowd:** 5,310. **Referee:** M. Breeze.
Cautions: Karlovic (AC) 29, Nastevski (MK) 53, Lapsansky (MK) 67, Ognenovski (MK) 73, Hassell (AC) 90.

Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, R. Vargas, Ognenovski, Vukadin, Nastevski (A. Vargas 63), Porter, Kiratzoglou, Da Costa, Marth, Jolic, Lapsansky.
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE: Cagalj, Lagati, Kovacevic, Brain, Veart, Hassell, Tunbridge, Rees, Pantelis, Karlovic, Pelosi, Goulding, Terminello, Godley, Budin.

Player Of The Week

ROBERT MIDDLEBY: Wollongong's left wing back with his industrious performance inspired the Wolves to victory over Sydney Olympic.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 1
(Grierson 19)
NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(Moreira 86)

Venue: Ballymore. **Crowd:** 1,500. **Referee:** P. Mur.
Cautions: Meredith (BS) 22, Enes (NS) 60, Srhoj (BS) 86.
Red Cards: Meredith (BS) 69.

Teams: BRISBANE STRIKERS: Baldock, McKain, Grierson, Foster, Srhoj, McLaren, North (Bell 51), Harris, Meredith, Rech (Pilic 45), Hews (Smeltz 65).
NORTHERN SPIRIT: Henderson, Cunuico, Bingley, Thomas, Enes, Moreira, Cranney (Reninich 77), Burgess (Watkins15), Spencer, Foster, Howson.

CANBERRA COSMOS 7
(Cortes 17, 55, 73 & 90, Anthopoulos 31, Ivanovic 63 & 79)
EASTERN PRIDE 1
(Trebbia 89)

Venue: Bruce Stadium. **Crowd:** 1,996. **Referee:** N. Fox.
Cautions: Cortes (CC) 22, Walmaggia (EP) 26, Trebbia (EP) 31.

Teams: CANBERRA COSMOS: Giannasca, Anthopoulos, Castro (Hagger 76), Angelucci, Cortes, Lyons (Ivanic 58), Prenzoski (Purdue 66), Hooker, Miyazawa, Aliffi, Kemp.
EASTERN PRIDE: Phassouliotis, Simon Webster, Duckworth, Walmaggia, Petrevski, Scott Webster, Mustac (O'Hare 60), Pardo, Trebbia, Elvin (McDermid 69), McDermott (Downie 75).

MARCONI STALLIONS 0
PERTH GLORY 2
(Edwards 14, Faria 44)

Venue: Marconi Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,348. **Referee:** C. Dionis.
Cautions: Longo (MS) 29, Despotovski (PG) 29, Gibson (MS) 41, Edwards (PG) 47, Renaud (MS) 48, Naven (PG) 78, A Costanzo (MS) 81.

Teams: MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Babic, Costanzo, Longo, Keun Kim, Afkos (Maisano 46), Brownlie, Gibson (Zori 46), Renaud, Trajanovski (Tome 60), Brodie.
PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Milicevic, Naven, Maloney (Harnwell 88), Edwards, Despotovski, Wehrman (Buljubasic 81), Junior, Faria, Deans, Mrdja (Carbone 72).

ROUND 27

FRIDAY APRIL 13 (GOOD FRIDAY)
Football Kingz FC . . . . . vs . . . . . Canberra Cosmos
Northern Spirit . . . . . vs . . . . . Parramatta Power

SATURDAY APRIL 14
Perth Glory . . . . . vs . . . . . Melbourne Knights
Eastern Pride . . . . . vs . . . . . Wollongong Wolves

SUNDAY APRIL 15
Adelaide City Force . . . . . vs . . . . . Brisbane Strikers

MONDAY APRIL 16
Sydney United . . . . . vs . . . . . Newcastle United

WEDNESDAY APRIL 18
Sydney Olympic . . . . . vs . . . . . South Melbourne

Marconi Stallions - bye

NEWCASTLE UNITED
BYE